THE TIMES

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76th Year

30 SEPTEMBER 1977
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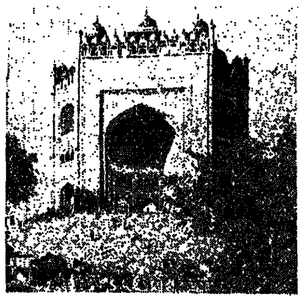
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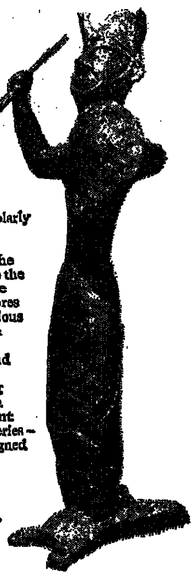
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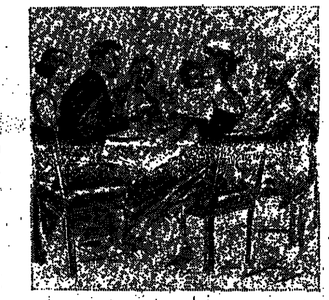
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80pp. Gutersloh: Sigbert Mohn.
Schöne Studienausgabe
Edited by Friedrich Bohne
Volumes 1-7
1,200pp. Zurich: Diogenes. DM49.60. (volumes also available separately)

With the publication in 1865 of *Max und Moritz* Wilhelm Busch's career was made, his fame established, and his artistic destiny sealed. He was thirty-three-years old at the time, gave up hoping that he would become known to the world as a painter and resigned himself to earning his livelihood as a verse-maker and cartoonist. It was an immensely productive resignation, and what it produced was a variation of genius—genius, it is true, within the limitations of the genre, but genius none the less: the power to speak with perfect fluency and felicity in two idioms, verse and drawing, and to accomplish in both what no linguistic translator can ever achieve—namely, so close a correspondence between the two that the memory of the reader and viewer is prone to run them into one. Remembering, for instance, this drawing and this line from *Abenteuer eines Junggesellen* (A Bachelor's Adventures—1875) he feels sure that, if a picture were able to make itself heard, it would say exactly this. Max's and Moritz's father, Debisch, the indignant father, exclaims in bidding his naughty son to leave the room (above right), a sentencing followed by the declaration of Debisch's pedagogical wisdom: corporal punishment touches surfaces only, but the condemnations the mind pronounces penetrate to the depth of the soul.

Das ist Debisch sein Prinzip:
Oberflächlich ist der Hieb.
Nur des Geistes Kraft allein
Schneidet in die Seele ein.

The rhyme of "Hieb" on "Prinzip" is as shattering as might have been the beating, forgone for the sake of the nasty principle.

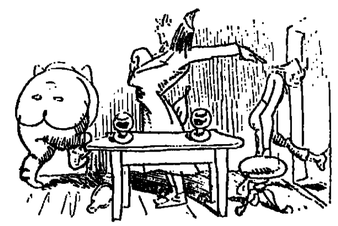
Many of Busch's caricatures and verses do not seem to come to a halt at the boundaries of the genre, but cross them with elegant ease and the verve of high irony, making inroads into regions where profundities are domiciled:

Die Lehre von der Wiederkehr
Ist zweifelhaften Sinns.
Es fragt sich sehr, ob man nachher
Noch sagen kann: Ich bin's, ...

This comes from his posthumous poems, published in 1909 under the title *Schein und Sein* (Appearance and Reality—the notorious metaphysical contrast of which German has made a graceful rhymed accord, distinguishing the grave opposites by no more than an initial fuller syllable). The doctrine of resurrection, the lines say, is wide open to doubt for it is highly questionable whether afterwards one will still be the very one "ich". The *principium individuationis* and the defeat it suffers at the hands of death has never been put with such epigrammatic and ironical succinctness, with that off-hand lightness that, mocks, and at the same time wittily states, problems of solemn antiquity, as do also the two lines:

Denn Niederlich, wie überall,
Ist hier der eigne Tüchtefall
—a verse that, in the context of the story, speaks of death as if it did no more than get into the way of one's carrying out plans made only the day before. Busch excels in such rhymed aphorisms that approach the depths in a spirit of seeming frivolity, but still preserve the echoes of the deep.

A lifetime, almost half a century, lies between *Schein und Sein* and the early book about the misdeeds of the two little rogues, *Max und Moritz*. Despite its having been surpassed by his later works, it has remained Wilhelm Busch's most popular work. To this day some of its verses come as readily to German minds and tongues as certain proverbial utterances of Friedrich von Schiller and, like Schiller's, they appear to have jumped into literature as fully armed quotations. There is, first and above all, the immortal Widow Bolte whose darling chickens are being cunningly undone by Max and Moritz: the rascals cause them to get entangled in a wicked arrangement of string and morsels of bread. Swallowing them, the birds choke to death in the branches of an apple-tree to which they have risen in panicky flight. When the unfortunate woman discovers them hanging there (centre right), she intones a dirge worthy of a great Romantic brief (bottom right). Thus she bids her eyes profusely to shed tears at this rude awakening from her life's most cherished dream—until the chicken pathos is comically twisted in the last of the four lines where the dream ends, suspended as it is from the apple-tree and joined to it by the simplest rhyme: "Hängt an diesem Apfelbaum!" And as life reclaims its rights and Widow Bolte resolves to put the outrageous frustration of her love to some use and fry the chickens, we see her descend into the cellar, not suspecting that Max and Moritz would meanwhile angle the birds from the frying-pan through the chimney. On the contrary, confidently looking forward to her tragic dinner, she fetches from down there her favourite vegetable, sauerkraut, of which she is fondest when it is warmed up once more:



"Pfui, mein Sohn, entferne dich!!"



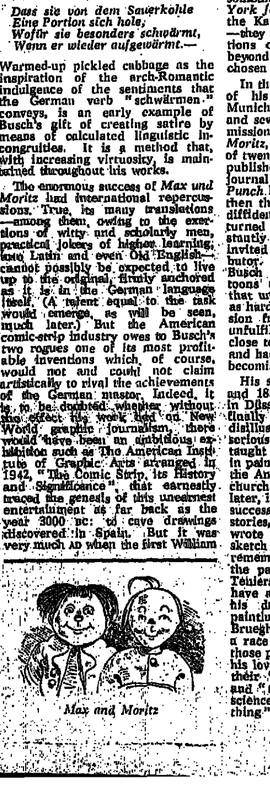
"Fliesset aus dem Aug", ihr Tränen!
All mein Hoffen, all mein Sehnen



Dass sie von dem Sauerkohle
Eine Portion sich hole,
Wofür sie besonders schwärmt,
Wenn er wieder aufgewärmt.—

Warmed-up pickled cabbage as the inspiration of the arch-Romantic indulgence of the sentiments that the German verb "schwärmen" conveys, is an early example of Busch's gift of creating satire by means of calculated linguistic incongruities. It is a method that, with increasing virtuosity, is maintained throughout his works.

The enormous success of *Max und Moritz* had international repercussions. True, its many translations—among them, owing to the exertions of witty and scholarly men, practical jokes of higher learning, into Latin and even Old English—cannot possibly be expected to live up to the original, firmly anchored as it is in the German language itself. (A talent equal to the task would emerge, as will be seen, much later.) But the American comic-strip industry owes to Busch's two rogues one of its most profitable inventions which, of course, would not and could not claim artistically to rival the achievements of the German master. Indeed, it is to be doubted whether without Busch's Max and Moritz the New World graphic journalism, there would have been an ambitious exhibition such as The American Institute of Graphic Arts arranged in 1942, "The Comic Strip, Its History and Significance", that earnestly traced the genesis of this uneasiest entertainment as far back as the year 3000 BC: to cave drawings discovered in Spain. But it was very much as when the first William Randolph Hearst came to know *Max und Moritz* and asked the nineteen-year-old Rudolph Dirks to produce something in that vein for his *New York Journal*. This is how, in 1897, the Katzenjammer Kids were born—they were to inhabit the imaginations of American children even beyond the life-span of Hearst's chosen artist.



Max and Moritz

In the autumn of 1858, during one of his not infrequent bouts of Munich-Schwabing bohemianism and seven years before he was commissioned to produce *Max und Moritz*, Wilhelm Busch, at the age of twenty-six, met Caspar Braun, the publisher of *Fliegende Blätter*, the journal that was for Germany what *Punch* has been for England. It was then that the young painter, rather diffident and weak in purpose, turned caricaturist. For Braun instantly recognized his gifts and invited him to become his contributor. It was the first time that Busch was paid for drawing cartoons and caricatures, an activity that until then he had looked upon as hardly more than a trifling diversion from his serious but as yet unfulfilled vocation. True, he was close to despairing of it at the time and had even toyed with the idea of becoming a bee-keeper in Brazil.

His sporadic spells between 1851 and 1854 as a student of art, first in Düsseldorf, then in Antwerp and finally in Munich, had ended in disillusionment or, in Belgium, in a serious illness. Yet the Netherlands taught him the only enduring lesson in painting, not in the classrooms of the Antwerp Royal Academy, but in churches and galleries. When, later, in 1886, at the pinnacle of his success as the author of comic stories, drawn and versified, he wrote a short autobiographical sketch "Regarding Myself", he remembered his first encounter with the paintings of Rubens, Brouwer, Teniers and Frans Hals. (He should have added Brueghel, for some of his drawings, though never his paintings, put the viewer in mind of Brueghel's portrayal of mankind as a race of inveterate bumpkins.) Of those painters he said that they won his love and admiration by virtue of their "divine lightness of touch" and "the innocence of a clear conscience that need not conceal anything". He would even forgive them, he added, for what they owe to him; their mastery, he believed in retrospect, persuaded him that he would never be able to make a living as a painter. Yet paint he did, without ever displaying what he accomplished. Long after his death there were, of course, exhibitions of the paintings that had survived his destructive discontents. Most of the critics too loyal to the example of Frans Hals to be capable of an independent existence, but there are a few, as Paul Klee noted in his diary, that deserve a place in a respectable gallery, particularly some shown soon in red jackets. (Klee singled them out as one might the men with red hats, the singular red spots in the paintings of Corot.)

Apropos of red jackets: "Regarding Myself", Busch spoke very particularly of the courtesan and Mlle —"she fat and thin" — in whose little Antwerp house he lodged. When he fell ill with typhoid fever, they nursed him back to health and gave him, as he departed, "a warm red jacket and three oranges" for the return journey to the place where he was born in 1832 and where his father was a grocer of modest means. Wiedensahl, a village in what was at the time the Kingdom of Hanover and is now the "Land" of Lower Saxony in the Federal Republic of Germany.

To Wiedensahl he returned again and again, and if it was at Wiedensahl, it was other countries, not too far removed, graphically or in character, for his blindspace. As his reputation increased, he made many acquaintances and even close friends among contemporary celebrities: the painters Franz von Lenbach and Friedrich August von Kaulbach, the architect Lorenz Gedon, the playwright Paul Lindau and the Bayreuth conductor Hermann Levi, who was next to his childhood companion, Erich Bachmann, his most intimate friend of his many years. Levi had the singular distinction of being addressed in letters by the reticent Busch as "dear friend", or once, in fun, as "Mr. Hebe" or "Schnickschnackmacher" or "dear noise-maker". Through him he also met Richard Wagner and Cosima. But despite the presence of such metropolitan company in

him, he spent most of his later bachelor years in the seclusion of the countryside, in the houses of relatives, mostly in parsonages. Even in his very early years, between 1841 and 1844, he lived away from his parents in the parsonage of his maternal uncle Georg Kleine, a knowledgeable and intellectually lively man, who undoubtedly was his most important educator. And it was in the parsonage of a nephew in Mechtshausen, near the Harz mountains, that he died in January 1908.

There was a time—the time of Wilhelm Busch—when Protestant parsonages had a big share in the making of German cultural history, although this was hardly ever a matter of the sons' continuing traditional pieties. More often than not it was, on the contrary, their loss of faith that released vital energies of the mind. Nietzsche is, of course, the most conspicuous apostate among them. Wilhelm Busch, who was to all intents and purposes the son of Pastor Kleine, emerged with a more conventional freedom from faith, a lighter burden of unbelief. Had it not been for his genius, he might well have been a typical patriot of the Bismarck era. He was, for instance, quite capable of gloating, in a facetious series of drawings, over the miseries Paris suffered after the military debacle of France in 1871, and displayed all the sentiments required of a partisan in Bismarck's Kulturkampf against the Catholic Church, that beloved Prussian Counter-Counter-Reformation and feeble, much belated epilogue to the Thirty Years War. Echoes of its raucous anticlerical battle-cries reverberate through Busch's *St Antonp in Padua* (1870), unhappily disturb one's amused contemplation of much that is exquisite and exquisitely funny in *Die fromme Helene* (Pious Helen—1872), as is, for instance, Uncle Nolte's philistine triumph, at the end, over those who became victims of their own wickedness. The good, he is convinced, is merely the evil that one is lucky enough to miss; and so he contentedly rubs his hands, immensely pleased because, thank goodness, he is not like those—not, that is, like the hell-bound evil-doers (right).

As can be seen, the post-draftsman's genius remained fundamentally unaffected by the partisan's mean opinions, and pious Helen's Uncle Nolte emerges as the perfect caricature of the German petit bourgeois, the Kleinbürger, most probably, like his author himself, a warrior in the Kulturkampf. None the less, there were occasions when Herr Busch, obedient citizen of Bismarck's new Reich, forced his genius into the service of his political sentiments. Thus he yielded to the urging of his business-minded publisher Bassermann to exploit the blasphemy stir and censorship scandal caused by *Fromme Helene*, and followed it up with something even more blatantly —and certainly more cheaply—anti-Catholic. The outcome was Busch's crudest and unfunniest work, *Pater Filucius*.

In his later and mellower years he regretted such excesses and disliked to be reminded of them. When his first biographer, one Eduard Daelen, who lacked the talent for his enterprise and any race in his devotion, dwelt emphatically on Busch's "anti-ultramontanism", he rebuked him in a letter from Wiedensahl (July 1886) for his "aggressive and impassioned tone of voice" that, although he himself was no friend of "the Romans", jars on his reconciliatory character. Or he wrote (in September, of the same year) to Franz von Lenbach: "It seems impossible to make people understand that I have done all my things from a reckless desire to please myself—except a few 'hunger products' and the tendentious trifle *Filucius*." Yet he never cried to apologize for the — sometimes exceedingly—incongruous exercise of antisemitism in the earlier works. Although there is no trace of it in his later masterpiece, *Balduin Bählamm* (1883), the "epic" of an aspiring poet's frustrations and the funniest wrench of the celebrated conflict between Art and Life, or *Maler Klecksel* (1884), the "education" of a painter, it recurs in *Eduard's Traum* (Edward's Dream—1891), a work by which its author set great store, perhaps just because it differs so much from his other productions: it is in prose and unaccompanied by pictures. It certainly does not lack interest, and this not only because its opening sentence seems to mock in anticipation, Freud's interpretive earnestness while at the same time it accepts the notion of sleep's disarming the Superego (or what afterwards was to acquire this name): "Some people are unfortunately fond of telling their dreams although these are hardly more than dubious entertainments the mind arranges in its servants' quarters after the master of the house has gone to bed. . . ."

Thus it also employs at the outset the rather advanced literary device of that radical irony which pretends to bring into question the worth of the whole story. In this case it is not so much a story as it is a sequence of dream fragments and above all the occasion for ironical or sarcastic demonstrations of the impurity of human motives, the deceptions of love and the wickedness of man's purposes. And having just deplored the readiness of people to communicate what they dream, the author makes Edward, the dreamer himself, tell his dream—despite his being "otherwise quite



"Das Gute—dieser Satz steht fest—
Ist stets das Böse, was man lässt!"



"Ei ja!—da bin ich wirklich froh!
Denn, Gott sei Dank! ich bin nicht so!!"

a good fellow". Well, the good fellow is sometimes also antisemitic in a conventionally silly manner, even though that passage of the dream is immediately followed by a much longer account of the disreputable transactions taking place in the house of a professed antisemite.

Of course, it is impossible today to speak of antisemitism without at once being assailed by the paralysing thought of Auschwitz; and indeed Auschwitz might never have been, had the unspeakable outrage not been preceded by the speakable and, alas, spoken attitudes of mind shared by Wilhelm Busch and countless other Germans, eminent and ordinary, not to forget such emancipated German Jews as, among others, Heine, Marx, Otto Weininger, and Karl Kraus. Yet it would be a great mistake to bring "in principle" their antisemitism or that of Wilhelm Busch (or of his favourite philosopher, "the great and grim" Schopenhauer whose pessimism has invaded, in comic metamorphosis, many of Busch's misanthropic verses) into the close connection with the mindless and yet systematic malefactions of the later mass executioners. For this link is more tenuous and problematical than necessarily appears to a generation intensely mindful of the holocaust. But there has been a great deal of antisemitism, "theoretical" and practical, in other Western nations, without the abysmal German consequences. ("Nietzsche and the Ideology of Fascism" raises similar questions—and he was the very opposite of a consistent antisemite.) The antisemitism of a man who, like Wilhelm Busch, educated himself by reading Homer, the Bible, the *Confessions* of St Augustine, Shakespeare and Dickens (did he feel confirmed in his antisemitism by the last two?) cannot possibly be like Julius Streicher's, even if a few of his caricatured Jews might have found a place in *Der Stürmer*.

One whose suspicion of mankind expresses itself in verses like:

Wie schad, o Mensch, dass dir das Gute
Im Grunde so zuwider ist—

(What a pity that the good is at bottom so contrary to human nature); or who answers a journal's question about his preferred occupation by saying: "To let the mind travel to those boundaries where the incomprehensible begins"; or who ironically knows how "refreshing and edifying it is to observe the grievances and follies of other people" and "to laugh even about oneself" because this affords the special pleasure of believing "that one is cleverer than oneself"; or who, having watched with horror country children present at the slaughtering of a pig, writes in a letter: "Death, cruelty, lust—they are all one in the expression of their faces"; or who accounts for the attraction the art of drawing has for him with the temporary absolution it grants him from the sins and oppressions of the world, projected as these are into the disembodied contours of creatures "who, particularly if they are not beautiful, can be made to put up with a lot before it begins to hurt their maker"—such a sage and artist cannot simply be a precursor of the apocalyptic thugs with unlimited executive power.

Wilhelm Busch once said of himself that he was a rationalist and freethinker during the day, but saw ghosts at night. The Jews of his antisemitism, just as those of many intellectual antisemites before Hitler, were more like Busch's nocturnal spectres than presences in the light of day. In the light of day they were Paul Lindau or, above all, the "dear Spektakelmacher" Hermann Levi. Indeed, a revealing analysis of this kind of antisemitism could be made on the basis of the friendship of the two and their exchanges of letters many of which refer in a jocular or not-so-jocular vein to the "Jewish problem"; on Levi's being a chosen conductor of the antisemitic Richard and Cosima Wagner; on the passages about Hermann Levi in the correspondence between Cosima and H. S. Chamberlain; and, *mutatis mutandis*, on Levi's once asking Busch in a letter written after they had together visited an old abbey: "Why, in that crypt, did you not throw me into its baptismal font and thus liberate me?".

Of course, such an analysis would not solve the problem rendered insoluble by its endlessly twisted and intertwined roots in religion, irrational anxieties, racial antipathies, economic history, tribal customs, commercial competitiveness and costs of mind; but it would help in the teaching of differences, the only intellectual defence against the "terrible simplifiers" (to quote *King Lear* and Wittgenstein). No doubt, every form of collective "anti" is a wicked, if often irrepressible habit of the mind; but, as is the case with every other disposition of the intellectual character, there are degrees of wickedness, and even the transition from one degree to the next, let alone the last, is a more complex matter than the simplifiers can see. If this were not so, Doomsday would be upon us every other week.

Balduin Bählamm, unroubled by such problematical intrusions, is Busch's grand petit-bourgeois odyssey of the "thwarted poet". Here the unity of verse and drawing is as perfect as the discord that is its theme: the persistent clash between the "higher striving" of the human spirit and the meanness and petty frustrations he unavoidably encounters in the world he bodily inhabits; and as the spirit and the world of Balduin are as unheroic as can be, the traditionally grand opposition, virtue or comedy of superior force, the tone is set by the dishevelled little "spirit" of the title-page: his wings are rudely tied together at which he is shedding an incongruously big tear:



The hilarious overture follows: the juxtapositions of the beatitude of the inspired poet and the dingy miseries of every day:

Wie wohl ist dem, der dann und wann
Sich etwas Schönes dichten kann!

Der Mensch, durchrieben und geschellt,

TOLKIEN
The Silmarillion

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Bemerkte schon seit alter Zeit,
Dass thun hienieden allerlei
Verdriesslich und zuwider sei.
Die Freude flieht auf allen Wegen ;
Der Ärger kommt uns gern entgegen.
Gar mancher schleicht betrübt umher ;
Sein Knopfloch ist so öd und leer.
Für manchen hat ein Mädchen Reiz,
Nur bleibt die Liebe seinerseits.
Doch gibt's noch mehr Verdriesslichkeiten.
Zum Beispiel lässt sich nicht bestreiten :
Die Sorge, wie man Nahrung findet,
Is häufig nicht so unbegründet.
Kommt einer dann und fragt : "Wie geht's ?"
Steht man gewöhnlich oder stets
Gewissermassen peinlich da,
Indem man spricht : "Nun, so lala !"
Und nur der Heuchler lacht vergnüglich
Und gibt zur Antwort : "Si, vorzüglich !"
Im Durchschnitt ist man kummervoll
Und weiss nicht, was man machen soll.—

Nicht so der Dichter. . . .
I envy people who can pen
A pretty poem now and then.
Congenitally shrewd and clever,
Man recognizes, now as ever,
That much contrariness and woe
Besets him daily here below.
Joy is capricious and elusive,
Annoyance blatant and obtrusive.
One goes about all glum and dank,
His buttonhole so void and blank ;
Another feels that life is blighted
Because his love is unrequited.
Perplexities dog every stride ;
And one that cannot be denied,
The worry how to make ends meet,
Keeps us forever on our feet.
A hearty "How are you" will quickly
Make most of us feel somewhat sickly ;
We manage but a feeble glow . . .
And mumble "Oh, so-so, you know . . ."
Avoid the lying hypocrite
Who yodels "Splendid ! Very fit !"

For by and large, we spend our days
In vague discomfort and malaise.
Not so the bard. . . .

The translation is by Walter W. Arndt who has accomplished the all-but-impossible : over long stretches his text strikes even one who is addicted to the original as wholly congenial and at times gives him the illusion that it is Wilhelm Busch himself that he reads. (Unfortunately the bilingual edition is out of print and equally excellent translations of *Maler Klecksel* and *Fipps the Monkey* are as yet unpublished.)

" Not so the bard "—his way of transcending the " discomfort and malaise " of life is now, in a splendidly sustained metaphor, likened to the labour expended by the farmer's wife in making butter from the " fatty element ". " Worried " by her forceful treatment,

It squelches, squooshes, gulps and goops,
Leaps up and down in tortured loops,

Until the substance, tickled sick,
Disintegrates in thin and thick.

When finally the great moment comes, she lifts

With tender fingers from the mould
The cake of butter, plump and gold.

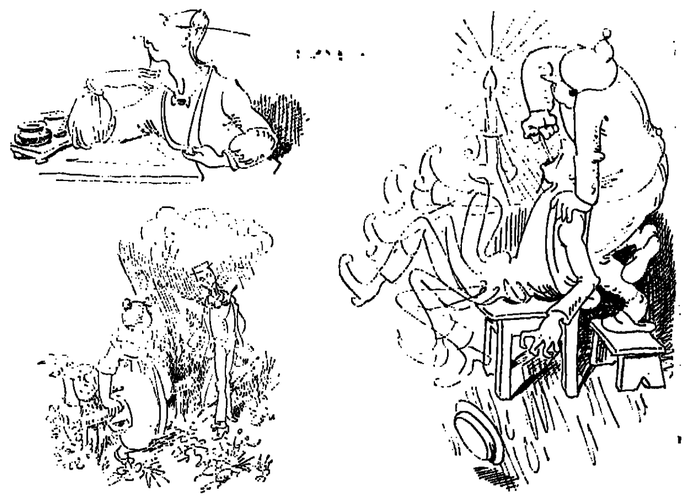
This is an entirely successful paraphrase of the incomparable and untranslatable two German lines, rhymed by means of a dialect form, phonetically rendered :

Und sieh, in frohen Ufunden hält se
Die wohlgeratne Butterwülze . . .

—whereupon follows the explosive " Just so the poet ". He too labours with the force and devotion of the farmer's wife and, having " squeezed and sweated something out ", he then

. . . eyes with pleasure and respect
The product of his intellect.

Baldwin—the name is irresistibly comic and suggestive of ineffectual gentleness, as is Bählamm, " lamm " meaning " lamb " and " bäh " being the vocal utterance of the animal, Bählamm (or Clement Dove, as Arndt has ingeniously



christened him in English) is never to reach that happy consummation although he (above left) knows what he wants :

Ein guter Mensch, der Bählamm hiess
Und Schreiber war, durchschaute dies.
Nicht, dass es ihm an Nahrung fehlt.
Er hat ein Amt, er ist vermählt.
Und nicht bloss dieses ist und hat er ;
Er ist bereits auch viermal Vater.
Und dennoch zwingt ihn tiefes Sehnen,

Sein Glück noch weiter auszudehnen.

He feels he must, and therefore can.

Whether, having left his office, his wife and his obstreperous children to seek the peace of the countryside, he is distracted from his poetic intent by the charms of a village maid leading a goat (bottom left), or whether (above right) he seeks relief from the painful consequences of his little escapade—a toothache induced by the cold water of the pond into which he is thrown, à la Falstaff, by an alliance of goat, girl and boyfriend (Busch is the Homer of the unmitigated calamity toothaches were before aspirin and modern dentistry), both the drawings and the text that is unison create and narrate these scenes, possess the wit and assured

Er möchte dichten, möchte singen,
Er möchte was zuwege bringen
Zur Freude sich und jedermannes;
Er fühlt, er muss, und also kann es.

A gentle clerk named Clement Dove
Was well aware of the above.
Not that he feels deprived or harried.

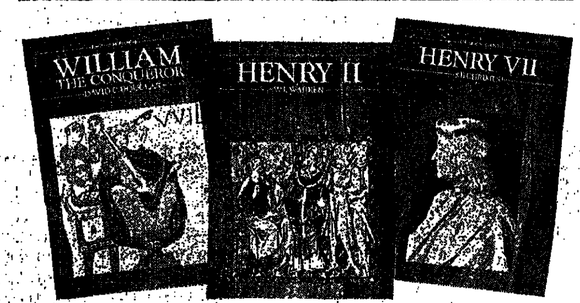
He has a job, and he is married.
Four healthy children, too, all told,
Are his to cherish and to hold.
And yet he feels, for all his bliss,
That deep down something is amiss.
He yearns to write, to speak with tongues,

He wants to blossom forth in songs
That strike a chord in every man.



Frau Bählamm ruft, als er erwacht :
" Heraus, mein Schatz ! Es ist schon acht ! "
(His lady's voice at ten past eight :
" Wake up, my pet ! It's getting late ! ")

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METHUEN

With the finest of pens

By Francis Wyndham

VICTORIA GLENDINNING :
Elizabeth Bowen
Portrait of a Writer
261pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £6.50.

Shortly before her death, Elizabeth Bowen made the following firm declaration : " Not one of the characters in my novels has originated, so far as I know, in life." That life was moderately uneventful but, like every life, contained its own covert drama. She was born in 1899, an only child of Anglo-Irish parentage, and her girlhood was clouded by her father's mental illness and her mother's early death. She married young, and if her relationship with her husband, Alan Cameron, was based on affection rather than passion, it lasted with apparent serenity until his death. Her remarkable literary gift was recognized soon after she started to publish, still in her early twenties, and although her books didn't sell widely until much later she always commanded a discriminating and appreciative readership. (Her writing is out of fashion at present, but this cannot last long.) For many years her time was spent between Oxford and London on the one hand, and on the other a fine inherited house in co Cork ; its eventual sale was a wound which she hid from outsiders with her habitual stoicism. She had at least one intense extramarital love affair and possibly others more transient ; the American poetess Msy Sarton, playing Vita to her Virginia, has claimed a night of love with her ; her later years were sustained by a steady and mutually inspiring *amitié amoureuse* with a distinguished Canadian diplomat. She was on terms, often of intimate friendship, with most of her contemporaries among the intelligentsia as well as many people who lived outside such circles. She died in 1973.

She is of enormous interest and importance because of her brilliant books, and as she kept these distinct from her life to a degree unusual even in writers of imaginative fiction it might be thought that an account of the life itself would be less than enthralling. However, she has been fortunate in her biographer who, while scrupulously remaining within the scope of ascertainable fact and treating gossip and rumour with judicious caution, has brought a novelist's flair to her assignment. A writer as enjoyable as Elizabeth Bowen must, of course, provide good copy —there are her letters to quote from, vivid anecdotes from articulate acquaintances, plenty of jokes—but Victoria Glendinning has gone beyond the artful assemblage of available material to construct a complex character and to hint at its essence. She writes with some perception of her subject's work but literary criticism plays a comparatively perfunctory part in her scheme and is never allowed to hold up what one is surprised to find can reasonably be called the action.

Elizabeth Bowen understandably resented the label of " sensitive lady novelist " but it is also understandable that these words should have been used about her because she was, beyond question, all three. Among the various attributes (including sharp social observation and ruthless wit) which combined to form her individual talent, sensibility surely had the most prominent place ; as L. P. Hartley once said of her, she wrote with " a finer pen " than any of her contemporaries. Too pure an artist to deny this quality expression in her work she seems in life to have cultivated a slightly bogus toughness in the hope of achieving a compensatory balance. She professed to despise " silliness " of any sort, however harmless, and dismissed guilt as a sordid and middle-class emotion ; at the same time, she treated nearly everyone she met with spontaneous kindness.

Her political views, never markedly liberal, hardened with experience into peevish reaction and she condemned any impulse to " interfere " with the policies of foreign governments (By this, she meant South Africa and Rhodesia—did she, one wonders, extend her isolationist code to include Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia ?) She was right to preserve her art from the taint of propaganda, but her lofty indifference to ideological perplexities may account for a central weakness in *The Heat of the Day* : as Rosamund Lehmann pointed out when the book appeared, the traitor Robert would have made more psychological sense as a Russian spy than a Nazi agent—in which case it might later have been acclaimed as uncannily prophetic after the defection, from the fringes of Elizabeth Bowen's own circle, of Burgess and Maclean.

Proud of belonging to the old Protestant Ascendancy, she was a circumspect Anglican, no doubt equally depressed by evangelical enthusiasm as by atheism. In a much-quoted phrase, she opted for " chance rather than " choice " on the grounds that it is more " lordly " —thus, applying the same aristocratic standard to metaphysical mysteries as to social behaviour. She confessed to a " farouche " side to her nature, and in a superficial sense contrived to lead a double life, separating the husband to whom she was devoted from her " clever " acquaintances whom he bored ; but the elegant highbrow of Regent's Park did not markedly differ from the tweedy chatelaine of Bowen's Court, and if it suited her to compartmentalize her existence in this and other ways she never suffered the trauma of a " split ".

Again and again in her books, as Victoria Glendinning points out, two dissimilar female characters are juxtaposed, both " drawn from aspects of her own personality, her self and her sub-self, as she expressed it ". One is clumsy, romantic and vulnerable while the other seems assured, worldly and rather hard. One is how she must have often felt herself to be (the Elizabeth Bowen who stammered and needed to wear glasses) while the other is how she wanted to become and hoped that she might appear to the world (the Elizabeth Bowen who mastered her stammer and refused to wear glasses). The clearest cases of this pairing are Lois and Marda in *The Last September*, Emmeline and Cecilia in *To the North*, Portia and Anna in *The Death of the Heart*. " Cecilia is horrid, isn't she ? But I have quite a feeling for her ", she wrote to A. E. Coppard, and I once heard her say that she really preferred Anna to Portia as a character.

Yet there is something not entirely convincing about these sophisticated ladies (Stella in *The Heat of the Day* is another example), an element of the second-rate in their studied style and brittle poise of which neither they nor their creator seem fully conscious. This is the only context in which I can discern that " faint whiff of vulgarity . . . of a magazine order ", which her great friend Edward Sackville-West found on rare occasions in her work (though I suspect that he meant something altogether different). This subtle sense of falsity may have come from her ingenuous admiration for the type and a desire to belong to it—to be cool, adroit, " smart ". It is never present in her treatment of those other girls in her novels, the ardent, uncalculating victims whose emotional integrity and blundering innocence claim so many victims of their own, for this is a type which she neither admired nor envied but in which she recognized (with embarrassment, perhaps even shame) a truer version of her self.

The formidable, gregarious and immensely likable personality which is recreated so lucidly and entertainingly in this biography may have originally been assumed as a disguise and then gradually have imposed itself on the creature it was intended to shield. The disguise achieved reality in a conventional form as Elizabeth Bowen, the celebrated writer, generous hostess, amusing conversationalist ; but it is the ghost of that buried creature (the lonely girl whose mother abandoned her by dying) which gives the polished mannered literary performances their exciting undertow of danger and transforms them into art.

With head unturned

By Robert Morley

BRYAN FORBES :
Ned's Girl
The Life of Edith Evans
297pp. Elm Tree Books. £5.95.

Ned's Girl, Bryan Forbes's life of Edith Evans, follows hard on the heels of the personal memoir written by her secretary Jean Batters. Miss Batters's account, recording the slaps Miss Evans occasionally administered over twenty-five years and the final dash her employee made for freedom, is a great deal briefer than that of Mr Forbes. Mr Forbes supplies the full treatment and deals with all of the eighty-eight years she was on the earth and the sixty-six she was on the stage. The book, meticulously edited, beautifully indexed, and generously illustrated, is written with dedication and devotion, the two qualities Miss Evans herself displayed in her professional life. Her first admirer was George Moore, her last Michael Parkinson. She dealt with them both as she dealt with everyone, coolly. No one ever turned her head for her. She held it high and gazed steadfastly at whatever view she had selected.

Mr Forbes is at his best filling in the environment, the rock on which she perched, the great blue cyclorama in the background, the pebbles and the twigs and the protective colouring of the showcase. For the book is conceived by a master taxidermist and the great bird surveys us impassively, the plumage intact, only here and there an almost imperceptible ruffling of the feathers. For all his skill, alas, Mr Forbes has failed to catch Miss Evans in full flight as Miss Batters occasionally managed to do. Nevertheless, there is much in his book to delight—not least the sparkling letters from Shaw alternatively coaxing and chiding. When *Heartbreak House* was revived at the Cambridge Theatre in 1943 he wrote :

But to have to pull the play through against four hopeless miscasts including a faded maiden aunt as your youthful rival and a Shotover who is obviously a leading juvenile in a stuck on beard, takes a bit of doing. It should be billed as Half Heart House. I greatly enjoyed all the money in the stalls.

Earlier, when the production of *Back to Methuselah* was planned, Shaw heard that Miss Evans had accepted the part of the Serpent and penned a hasty protest to Ayliff—" No property head that the clumsiest pantomime property man could perpetrate could be half as fatal as Edith Evans' torso offering itself as the voice that breathed on Eden "—and insisting that on this occasion Edith should be heard but not seen. Edith wrote back that she was broken-hearted and Ayliff, that he planned putting his star in a snakeskin up to her head, surrounded by the cobra hood. Shaw for once capitulated.

There are not, alas, many letters from Miss Evans, but her own mailbox was seldom empty. Leading playwrights wrote her endless appeals to appear in their works—Shaw himself, St John Ervine, Charles Morgan and always Enid Bagnold. Miss Evans seldom said yes at the first time of asking. When the cast was finally assembled for *The Chalk Garden*, the authoress sent what she called a little prayer of death. " My love and never let me bother you with a breath." Miss Evans told her that later on during the rehearsals she might presume to breathe quietly in her ear and Miss Bagnold was eventually summoned to lunch and allowed her whisper.

She suggested " a very small thing, a dash if you like, a pause in the middle of a certain line which you don't make and should make " " Now ", said star, " you've ruined it, you've ruined the whole thing. I don't know whether I can go on, I shall dry up every time I get near it." Miss Bagnold stepping cautiously had gone smack through the ice, and for a moment Miss Evans seems to wink at us from under the glass dome; but, of course, it is Miss Bagnold and not Mr Forbes who tells the tale.

The sixty-four dollar question was, of course, Guy Booth, her husband, who loved her all his life and kept his distance. Miss Evans had a tendency not to forget him completely, but at any rate to leave him behind when circumstances seemed to allow it. He wrote her endless love letters, complimenting them both on a perfect marriage and reminding her once when she was playing Cleopatra of the good fortune of the asp with whom he avowed he would be happy to change places, at least for a matinee ; but, alas, he was in Venezuela at the time. Even when he came home and retired, their farmhouse in Biddenden was never exactly shared. Edith retained her chambers in Albany. I have always thought that to marry anyone who lives in Albany is asking for trouble but by then, of course, he had been married to her for nearly ten years. She was in America when he died of a brain tumour.

Rereading his letters when she was old she told Mr Forbes that she had never realized how much he loved her; he wisely refrained from calling the book Guy's Girl. She was very much her own girl, which was why she was able to give herself to all of us who had the inestimable privilege of watching her on the stage

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BELL

Life without verbs

By Emma Tennant

KATE MILLETT:

Sita

321pp. Virago. £6.95 (paperback, £1.95).

In the age of recycling, it's worth noting who has been recycled into whom. Marilyn Monroe and Elvis come out endlessly as themselves, silk-screened and mirrored into infinity, receding, inflating like images in a funfair Hall of Fame. Everyone agrees a bad job has been done on Nixon. But Kate Millett's transformation is one of the strangest, making Jan Morris's "journey" appear merely suburban. For all the talk of "personhood", she has become—and very much wants us to know it—a woman in the old, perforative sense of the word: emotional, constantly in danger of losing her identity, terrified of solitude and not pleased at being forty. How did this come about? What spare part, hitherto omitted, has, as it were, slipped in?

The answer seems to be Sita. Sita is a maddening, "aristocratic", brown skinned ("Latin") woman, with whom Ms Millett fell in love; and the book is an account of the fading of their love affair, and of Ms Millett's agonized and masochistic feelings about it. It is written in short, panting breaths, like those proposed by ante-natal clinics for the second stage of labour: "In bed she seems ready for me. Permitting me brief access, one bittersweet opportunity to enter and be her lover. Does she remember him *and compare, measure me against* him, Neal of only last night. Her satisfaction. Her godlike powers." It is a new verbless language that is used in America to denote passion — Love-Storyese. Verbs, like jealous rivals for attention, might deflect the reader from the rapid thrust of the sentence; keep them out, and you have the experience pure and simple, the glorious, meaningful banality of it all. Ms Millett, who started on this tack in *Flying*, her previous book, has gone over the hill with her verblessness in *Sita*. Of course, an absence of verbs makes for passivity. And what emerges most clearly from this chronicle of pain is that the author has lost all sense of autonomy, all desire for action or independence. It is a cruel fate for the woman who taught millions of women to throw over their homes and children and take up aeronautics. Yet these original flying women, like Millett and Jong, appear only to want to come down in a cosy nest, a scene of domestic bliss, the wide skies and turbulence of "freedom" altogether too horrible for words.

Kate and Sita, in their early days, knew the bliss of reciprocal love. Sita was ten years older, mother of two and grandmother of a sad eight-year-old, whose own mother, Sita's daughter, is a junkie and drop-out. Sita made it inevitable, by using these Latin tricks so irresistible to Kate, for Kate to leave her lonely New York loft and go to live in Sita's matriarchal set-up in California. Sita had a male-chauvinist office job ("bureaucratic whore" her disappointed lover shrieks after her when it's clear that Sita's love is going while Kate, who knew no one in California, had a women's class at Berkeley which she kept cancelling and rein-taring depending on the mood of the moment.

What has come over Ms Millett, brave civil rights champion and, as it's very easy to see from the book, a warm and intelligent person? Is this what happens to people when they have an unhappy love affair? Is this what she's trying to tell us? Or is it important for her that her followers, those women who are still trying desperately to hold the aircraft in the air, should understand that their goddess has feet of clay? Certainly she's chosen a dicey moment to tell us that she feels old and finished, that she tried to commit suicide several times before going to live with Sita in California, that loneliness and emptiness are all that lie ahead. (She hints, at the end of the book, that her liberation from Sita has brought her freedom, but we are so depressed at the prospects by then that it hardly seems to matter.) There will be plenty of crashes soon if these messages keep coming over.

Possibly it's the Hall of Fame which is responsible for this sense of imminent collapse. The publicity that has attached to figures such as Kate Millett in America is unimaginable. Her greatest desire, as she showed in *Flying*, was to reconstruct some sort of personality for herself after the glare of the cameras had begun to fade. It was very unlucky for her that she fell in love with someone who brought out her deepest "womanly", masochistic urges. Yet one thing is clear to see, for all the honesty of the confessions and the strength of the obsession with Sita: in order to make the obsession real, a good deal more is needed than emotion recollected emotionally.

From Wimbledonia with love

By Gavin Ewart

CELIA HADDON:

Great Days and Jolly Days
The Story of Girls' School Songs

128pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £3.50.

With a brief foreword by Joyce Grenfell, a small song sheet with five actual songs, and some very evocative photographs (classrooms, stiff-upper-lip goodbyes at railway stations, hockey, tennis-courts, the gym), this is not so much a record of girls' school songs as a history of Girls Only education in what was then the British Empire, from its beginnings in about 1850 to the present day. The songs are morally strong, aesthetically weak, and exist very much in Arthur Marshall country ("We work with a will, we are earnest"; and a hockey song: "HIC, HAC, HOC away, set it on the roll,/Pass it down to somebody, and quickly, shoot a goal"). The songs are rarely given in full, but extracts are used to illustrate points. In the last century, when most were written, words like loyal, true and brave were taken at face value. It was a very uplifting kind of poetry, owing a lot to Tennyson and Hymns A & M, or (on a lower level) to greetings cards ("But if failures walk beside,/Down-hearted we, and heavy-eyed?/No! We'll always merry be/And success we'll surely see").

Just as the schools themselves are threatened, by coeducation and comprehensives, the songs are threatened. The very idea of having a school song has been ridiculed. Collecting school songs once for an anthology, I found one headmaster who refused permission, obviously suspecting what the three songs he was withholding would be victimized. Celia Haddon, I note, also collected two headmistresses who would not come across with the goods. This, I think, shows unnecessary sensitivity. With a song, it doesn't matter if the words are crummy—most of them are; it's still fun to sing them. The uplift (the "corporate virtues") may not stir the adolescent singers ("Our colours keep from stain,/Uphold with might and main,/The honour of our school for aye") but a good tune will.

The first big hit was the Harrow School song "Forty Years On" (1872). From then on, every school had to have one. The girls' schools copied the boys' very closely; "Forty Years On" was even sung unaltered. Fierce games like hockey were celebrated. Hockey itself, after education at home by governesses, was daring and progressive (short skirts, freedom from stays). Wimbledon House, later Roedean, had a song which said "Hockey triumphs all are thine,/All thy freaks are liberty,/Wimbledonia, blithe and merry,/Lasting health I wish to thee". What freaks were those, then?

Even netball was celebrated ("Oh, the netball team is a stalwart band"). Work was something new and exciting ("Come, work well, my girls, 'tis at glory we aim,/to add honours new to our 'lustrious name"). Celia Haddon makes the very good point that many of these songs are love poetry, written by women who really loved the schools they wrote about. The lost concepts of "girlhood" and "childhood", even "innocence", were still around; though it's worth remembering that this is middle and upper-class education. Board schools didn't have songs; nor, perhaps, quite so many morals.

The songs were mainly inspiring; but some were gentle and maternal (the School loves you). Only the Catholic schools, with their all-pervading religious atmosphere, had no games songs—and didn't play hockey. Instead the Virgin, or the Saint the school was named after, were invoked.

The author says that it is a pity that Miss Beale and Miss Buss, two of the great pioneers of feminine education, should be commemorated by "a vulgar little rhyme", but that vulgar little rhyme is still quite funny ("Miss Buss and Miss Beale/Cupid's darts do not feel./How different from us, /Miss Beale and Miss Buss"), a small oasis of humour in the middle of so much high endeavour. She has a chapter on "Mottoes, Flowers and Colours" (with an important section on knickers); she has included colonial schools, accounts of speech days, and a nice belligerent song from Sydney:

Girls who wear the brown and yellow
Stand in line, each by her fellow,
Sweetly sing or loudly bellow
Sydney Girls' High School!

About the only fault, introduced perhaps by some evil printer or proofreader, is the translation of *monumentum aere perennius* as "a monument more lasting than grass".

Lives of the toppers

By Maurice Richardson

HORACE BLEACKLEY and JOHN LOFLAND:

State Executions Viewed Historically and Sociologically
The Hangmen of England and The Dramaturgy of State Executions

325pp. Montclair (New Jersey): Patterson Smith. $14.

The literature of suspension is an eccentric corpus and cannot always be raked upon to support classical taste. Yet who has forgotten Mr Pooderells weepie century or so ago when *The Times* devoted three full columns and a leader to the hanging of Charles Peace, most famous of nineteenth-century criminals, at Armley Gaol, Leeds.

Certainly, *State Executions* is a curiosity, pertaining to the black-joke department. It consists of a reprint of Horace Bleackley's *The Hangmen of England*, followed by an essay by John Lofland, an American sociologist, with a passion for capital punishment presently applied. Bleackley, though nothing like as significant as Mr Lofland would have us believe, was a not unamusing figure, one of those amateur antiquarian historians. Born in 1868, son of a rich Manchester cotton bleacher, he went to Cheltenham and Harley (why two public schools?) and Oxford. He retired early from business and wrote novels and biographies.

He listed his recreation in *Who's Who* as "Baiting Bolshies", but died in 1931 too early to have appreciated the full punitive achievements of Stalin.

The Hangmen of England, published in 1929, is a collection of biographies, from the original Jack Ketch—he who made such a dreadful bungle of beheading poor Monmouth in 1685, was dismissed from office for drunkenness and was reinstated to hang the accused in the Bloody Assizes—to Albert Pierrepoint, recently retired, subject of the favourite Victorian music-hall pun: "If Pa killed Ma who'd kill Pa?" "Marwood". It is clearly written with flights of irony somewhat curtailed by the author's approval of his subjects' office.

They are familiar enough, no doubt, but what a crew! One cannot refrain from a little fragmentary recapping. Of Georgian hangmen there was John Price, always a source of satisfaction because he was himself hanged. Jolly Roger Tury, executioner of Cambridge, and Thomas Turin, described by Bleackley as "the greatest hangman of them all", who used his own garters to pinion the gallant Irish Amazon, Hannah Dagge, after she had kicked him out of the death cart. John Theile, who became unhinged; it was said by the ghosts of the executed he had hanged.

And there is Edward Dennis, he who took part in the Gordon riots and was arrested, but, instead of being himself hanged as Dickens understandably insisted in *Barnaby Rudge*, was released to hang the rioters. Of him Bleackley remarks: "A passion for destruction is latent in the hearts of all uneducated folks."

In the next century there was William Calcraft, hangman for *forty-five years*, having worked his way up from pie-seller at executions, possibly a manic depressive face he started by being callously jocose, clowning on the scaffold, and later became sour and melancholy. But has not also another curiosity, such a "Lady Betty", the Irish hangwoman, the intoxicating priestess of the executive for the Connaught circuit. We are told tantalising little about her, except that she was herself a convicted murderess.

There are horrors galore, of course; but perhaps *most disturbing* of all is Charlie Peace's complaint on the scaffold that Marwood has thrown the white bag over his head too soon while he still has an important message to communicate to the reporters. (Students will note that, as reprinted here anyway, Bleackley's treatment of the post-Marwood era is incomplete and nothing is said about Berry's table of drops correlated to the victim's weight in pounds.)

"Solemn as an owl, Mr Lofland mauls and victim.

"Solemn as an owl, Mr Lofland

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The medium for mischief

By Rosemary Dinnage

NIGEL NICOLSON (Editor):
A Change of Perspective
The Letters of Virginia Woolf 1923-1928

624pp. Hogarth Press. £12.50.

How pleasant to be Mrs Bell and to get a letter from one's sister about Lytton's broken heart or meeting Noel Coward or a judge getting locked into his pew at a wedding, or about one's ex-husband ("he seemed to think that he had been very gallant and adventurous and romantic during the last few months, and deserved a medal: so that's all it should be—He dresses in sky blue flannel, with blue tie and pocket handkerchief and says he has lost a stone and a half"). Or to be Mrs Nicolson, hearing about meeting Edith Sitwell—"she is like a clean hare's bone that one finds on a moor with emeralds stuck about it"—and how the Seafarers Educational Society has bought two copies of *To the Lighthouse* (just imagine "the merchant service learning navigation and the use of foghorns" from its author); or Mr Jacques Raverat hearing the whole scandalous affair of Lydia Lopokova and the sanitary towels; or Mr Garnett getting the reaction to his new book—"you twitch the world around and give me another side to look at"; or Mr Fry getting the lowdown on Middleton Murry—"what bloodless flea to talk about life! that shifty ruffian who can't keep his hands out of other people's pockets to prate of honesty!"; or young Mr Bell hearing from his favourite aunt:

> How in God's name can you be content to remain a painter? Surely you must see the infinite superiority of the language to paint? Think how many things are impossible in paint; giving pain to the Keynes', making fun of one's aunts, telling libidinous stories, making mischief. . . . Throw up your career, for God's sake.

They flow in glorious profusion from Virginia Woolf's pen, those things impossible in paint, in this volume of letters, the happiest so far: the risqué stories, the making fun and even making a little mischief, and much more. The letters cover her early to mid-forties, as cheerful and successful a period as any in her life: there were no serious breakdowns; *The Common Reader*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *Orlando* carried her forward from being a promising to being a leading and successful novelist; and there was the affair with Vita Sackville-West.

The letters to Vita make up between a quarter and a third of the text. Knowing how equally full of vulgar curiosity Virginia Woolf was herself about her friends' affairs, one need have no priggy guilt about watching matters develop from polite beginnings through their intense heyday, to the fading out of the affair towards the end of the book: noticing the increasing casual references to the question of loving one's own sex, wanting to seduce beautiful Italian girls and so on; speculating over phrases like "Is flicking a game for ladies or housemaids?" and "It's the last chance of a night before London's chastity begins"; noticing that on their holiday together in 1928 V. and V bought separate sketchbooks; wondering how overtly lesbian really minded when Vita moved on to her next lover. It cannot be certain how much the episode meant to her, but it is evident that it remained separate from her continuing affection for her husband, Leonard.

As in the earlier volumes, there is very little here about the week-to-week progress of her writing, which she kept for her diary. Roger Fry, asking about the "meaning" of the lighthouse, is distinctly fobbed off:

> I meant *nothing* by The Lighthouse. One has to have a central line down the middle of the book to hold the design together. . . . I can't manage Symbolism except in this vague, generalised way. Whether its right or wrong I don't know, but directly I'm told what a thing means, it becomes hateful to me.

Even in the letters to fellow-writer Vita there is not much about writing, although there are exquisite descriptions of some powerful images, and she had written to Raverat, Vita writes with a pen of brass. But there is a defence against an accusation that Virginia makes "lovely phrases": "after all, what is a lovely phrase? One that has stopped up us much Truth us it can hold"; and later,

> As for the *mot juste*, you are quite wrong. Style is a very simple matter; it is all rhythm. Once you get that, you can't use the wrong words. . . . Now this is very profound, what rhythm is, and goes far deeper than words. A sight, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to fit it.

Lovely phrases and *mots justes* are utterly foreign to these letters: there is a brightness and a quickness, a transparency of style, words falling into place with only the lightest and most sensitive of touches.

Their recipients, generally, are the same loved but laughed-at comrades-in-arms as before. The group is honourably defended:

> Where they seem to me to triumph is in having worked out a view of life which was not by any means corrupt or sinister or merely intellectual; rather ascetic and austere indeed; which still holds, and keeps them dining together, and staying together, after 20 years; and no amount of quarrelling or success, or failure has altered this. Now I do think this rather creditable.

Ascetic and austere in another sense they indeed were; it was not until these years that money was found for lavatories—"two water-closets, one paid for by Mrs Dellcoway, the other by the Common Reader" at Rodmell; and we hear of a green felt hat for 7s 11½d. The attitude is one of aristocratic amusement at the ridiculousness of having money; though Vita, it is true, had Knole and a butler—"Noodles or whatever his name is".

And once again Vanessa dominates, to a surprising degree, the mental landscape of her now more famous sister. Vanessa is incomparable, and Virginia will never be quite like her, or sure of her affection, free of jealousy. Vanessa has her children: the shadow of barrenness again falls over pages here and there. Vanessa also, once, had Clive, who distressed his sister-in-law so much by his flirtation with her not long after his marriage: "for some reason that turned more of a knife in me than anything else has ever done", she writes here. So Clive appears often in these pages, always as the butt of her most ferocious mockery.

One of the incidental pleasures in the letters is the picture of travelling 1920s-style. One takes the Channel boat, avoiding the Aldous Huxleys because she looks such a fashion-plate; one stays in small Italian inns where there are only rarely fleas and the WCs are "fair"; at Syracuse one runs into Osbert Sitwell—and looking out of the carriage window at Cività Vecchia, whom does one see but D. H. Lawrence and Norman Douglas, sitting side by side on a bench, before one is whisked off by the train. We leave the writer about to be whisked off to Germany, where Vita is staying, where Vanessa and Duncan are going to visit galleries, Leonard to hear every opera ever written, Virginia to go to the Planetarium, and all to meet at intervals to drink beer, wrapped in bearskins and rugs.

Swash and buckle

By Anne Duchêne

RONALD DUNCAN:
Obsessed
A Third Volume of Autobiography

166pp. Michael Joseph. £4.95.

This volume of Ronald Duncan's autobiography is a dubious achievement. Mr Duncan is a kind of latter-day Georgian whose memoirs would not have much interest, beyond a few sidelights they offer on theatrical history, if their prose had not released an exuberance muffled in his poetry and plays. In this volume, however, the jovial sexual swashbuckling which has become part of his new stock-in-trade leaves real casualties. Everyone nowadays has to draw his own lines on his own ethical relief map, and many people may find the gradient here between amusement and affront too steep for them.

The book is about his love-affair in the late 1950s with the actress Virginia Maskell. She was then twenty-one, Mr Duncan in his forties with a wife of twenty-five years' standing, on whom he remained deeply dependent. By the end of this volume, Miss Maskell has just had a nervous breakdown. Later, she was to marry, have children, and commit suicide, apparently asking Mr Duncan on her deathbed to write the story of their love. At this allw volume, written as a long address to her memory, it increasingly bedded but with amiable, 1920s adventitious endpoints; there may be another to come; and one wonders if the charge is altogether executed as Miss Maskell intended.

The delights, absurdities and pains of their evidently very deep infatuation with each other are vividly recorded. She might feel, though, that we need not know about her inhibitions about his hairy legs, her hormone imbalance, her increasing preference for masturbating Mr Duncan rather than copulating, his suspicion that she feared her own homosexuality, and suchlike. Would her children (the Duncans' are older, and schooled to indulgence) wish for this unusual public bequest? Might Mr Duncan have refrained from endowing them with it? Or will, in fact, nobody remember or care about the story a month or two hence?

There is that theme: engendered by much of the book lies in Mr Duncan's failing to decide between the role of clown and that of confessant—whether to carry on in his popular role as Rabelais, or strike out further as Rousseau. Rabelais, by selection, can still make people laugh; Rousseau, by putting in everything, makes a great many people feel morally quite queasy. Mr Duncan apparently attracts the grotesque innocently as well as creating it—one of his plays closing in New York because the two leading ladies eloped together. He was enjoyably aware of the idiocy of his own to-and-froing between his wife and his mistress, changing tie and cuff-links and other love-tokens appropriately on route. When he announced (erroneously) an operation for cancer, both women—who liked each other very much—rallied round in a ludicrous rota-system: "All men are babies; but I am such a baby, I don't need one mother, but two."

He was genuinely stricken when his wife, temporarily carried away in a sedan-chair by a young woman with a motor-cycle, sought a divorce; and very relieved when she relented. (Friends, including Eliot and Britton, were sympathetic when confided in. Lord Harewood, his landlord, recommended a psychiatrist. And then Lady Juliet produced her lady psychiatrist for Miss Maskell; comfortable phrases such as "I decided to spend a few days alone then have my psychiatrist join me at the farm" abound.)

"The Rousseau" in Mr Duncan's make, however, contains the ingredients, raised to comedy, to produce a Rousseau-Rousseau: despite the proposition that a man may love two women at once. He was happiest when his wife and mistress "were together and I was in the next room. Only then could I experience that solitude which is not loneliness, and be whole, and not divided in part. Fit for the nut-house? Indubitably." He recognized that he wanted "to have my cake and eat it. What's wrong with that? Doesn't every child want that? And why is we all more, I mean less, than children?" The coarse conclusions there typify his unsteady, evasive focus. In this setting, the love-poems seem quite unduly protentious, the ardent love-letters embarrassingly artificial. The three protagonists seem to have remained forbearing and generous in their confusion. One would like to think this painful little story need have no sequel.

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On the altars of Angka Loeu

By Michael Leifer

JOHN BARRON and ANTHONY PAUL:
Peace With Horror
The Untold Story of Communist Genocide in Cambodia

233pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £4.95.

Cambodia under the rule of Lon Nol became synonymous with corruption. Under the rule of his fundamentalist revolutionary successors it has become synonymous with bestiality. The record of such bestiality is the subject-matter of this study of the appalling experience of Cambodia from the time of the fall of Phnom Penh in April 1975. During the preceding five years, the country had been ravaged by a cruel war and a brutalization for which the American government of President Nixon cannot avoid its heavy share of responsibility. In the introduction to *Peace With Horror* Jon Swain of *The Sunday Times* points to this source of explanation for the state of mind of the young Khmer Rouge peasant soldiers who appear to come out of an Asian version of *Lord of the Flies*.

Despite neglect of the crucible of revolution, this chronicle of horror by two members of the *Reader's Digest* staff represents as thorough an investigation of the fate of Cambodia as would seem possible through a careful analysis of the testimony of refugees from that stricken country. The authors go to great pains to explain their methods of investigation and set out in detail in chapter notes the sources of their information. Indeed, their gruesome findings in terms of the far larger number of deaths caused by starvation, disease and culpable negligence than by execution and massacre have been borne out in evidence presented in July before the American House of Representatives Sub-Committee on International Relations.

The harrowing chronicle begins with the fall of Phnom Penh and recalls the false hopes of its heavily swollen population. It describes the inhuman and forcible evacuation of the capital including the ruthless ejection of the wounded and dying from its hospitals, and quotes Jon Swain's personal observation, "In five years of war, this is the greatest caravan of human misery I have seen". Accounts of indiscriminate and mass executions, criminal brutality and acts of mindless violence follow one after another. The authors describe a political purge, in which not only the military officers and senior civil servants of the Lon Nol government are exterminated, but also a whole educated class along with tens of thousands of political innocents.

From a description of organized killing, the focus is transferred to the experience of the collective farms and the gross excesses of Hitler's Germany and the Japanese prisoner-of-war camps come readily to mind. Finally, the authors recount some personal histories of fortunate escapees and the stranger-than-fiction tales of how they reached the refugee camps of Thailand and the horrifying sights which they encountered on their way.

In this vivid descriptive account of a living nightmare, there is only limited explanation of why such an atrocity should have taken place. In the second chapter of the book, however, the authors provide some discussion of Angka Loeu (High Organization) which appears as an omnipotent, and merciless, secular God whose word is absolute law and whose name is used to justify the most inhumane barbarism. Angka Loeu would appear to be the political Frankenstein monster of a group of French-educated intellectuals of the same generation who attended university in France in the 1950s. Alienated by the Cambodia of Prince Sihanouk, which was not quite the idyllic haven which the authors suggest, this small group became attached to a limited insurgency which became the beneficiary of Prince Sihanouk's decision to seek asylum in Peking following his deposition.

Endowed with legitimacy by the Cambodian head of state and spearheaded by Vietnamese shock-troops, they set out to build the only true communism in the former Indochinese kingdom.

Their zeal was that of the fundamentalist believer, and they harnessed the energy of a deprived rural population and directed it against the cities, represented as sinks of social and political iniquity. They saw their task as that of cleansing Cambodia of the legacy of its past and re-creating a society based on the glory of a manual labour of which they possessed little, if any, personal experience. This theory was translated into a macabre practice during the course of a savage war. At its bitter end, an indiscriminate burning of all literature, from temple manuscripts to medical textbooks, accompanied the slaking of nihilist lusts on the part of peasant boys who had been taught not to show any feelings towards those who had not shared the brutalizing hardships of five years of war on the Khmer Rouge side. Indeed, just as the Americans destroyed Vietnamese villages in order to save them, so the Khmer Rouge soldiers decimated the Cambodian people in order to save the revolution.

This testament to man's inhumanity to man is unique in its record of one ghastly experience. But its lesson is that such ordained terror may be the expected consequence of a political creed being elevated to the status of a jealous religious faith. Indeed, the experience of Cambodia exemplifies the extreme practice of fundamentalist political religion with mass sacrifice on the bloody altars of Angka Loeu. Cambodia today also bears some resemblance to the ruthless collectivist experience of the reign of King Jayavarman VII who ruled in the latter part of the twelfth century. He drove his subjects mercilessly but left us a legacy to posterity the magnificent Bayon, the centrepiece of the temple city of Angkor Thom. In an interview with the Vietnam news agency last year, the prime minister of Cambodia, Pol Pot, confessed: "we have not made any noteworthy achievements except the revolutionary movement of the masses".

This is hardly an agreeable book to read but it so commanded the attention of this reviewer that he felt obliged to finish it at one sitting. The book is profoundly disturbing, but its authors have performed a valuable service in bringing its harrowing subject-matter to light.

Target practice

By A. E. Campbell

RICHARD ROSE:
Managing Presidential Objectives

180pp. Macmillan. £8.95.

Richard Rose's latest book is a depressing one. It is so not because it is uninteresting or ill-written, but because it explores a problem which appears to be insoluble. His subject is the laudable efforts of the American government to improve its own efficiency, that is, to formulate precisely what it is trying to do, so that it can find economical and effective ways of doing it; or, alternatively, if that seems impossible, so that it can discover why and do something else. The government is American, but the problem is universal.

And it is insoluble. It may be painful to discover, in President Nixon's phrase, that one cannot solve problems by throwing money at them; it is even more painful to discover that one cannot solve problems by setting intelligent and energetic men to work on them. Professor Rose deals with the abortive Planning Programming Budgeting System under President Johnson, but gives most of his attention to the latest effort—Management by Objectives, or MbO. The analogy with sound business practice is clear, but government cannot be approximated to business administration. Businessmen test their success by the making of money, and to this end they shape their organization. The present point is that the organization is directed to something outside itself, the body of customers. The relationship of government with governed is not of that kind, nor should it be so.

The interaction of government and governed is so complex that only where the government is acting on other nations in defence matters—does the business analogy have some validity. Three objectives can sometimes be defined and the cost of achieving them measured. While there may be arguments over defence policy as over anything else, and while critics have to contend that any given policy is determined by the selfish interests of a group, in principle the beneficiary of defence is the whole nation. In other matters, such as health or education, the central argument, however complicated by ideology or convention, is inevitably over who gets what and who pays for what. In such matters the government dispenses patronage, and patronage is a wasting asset. For one client satisfied, there are ten dissatisfied, and that is true of group patronage as of private patronage. Governments are now attempting many functions in the control of the economy, the pursuit of social justice, the preservation of the environment—which conflict with each other and which are each unattainable. These two peak of a choice "becoming" versus "being" is usually refer to the rebellion of some powerful group. Such rebellion is the outward sign that too many clients are unsatisfied.

The objectives of government will therefore be either vague or trivial because any important objective will be rejected by a growing body of clients before it is attained. At this point Professor Rose borrows the time-honoured analogy of the ship of state. "The captain is supposed to know in what direction he wishes the ship to go, and how to steer it there." Well, no doubt he is supposed to know, and he may have wishes, but the ship of state, as Michael Oakeshott long since pointed out, is not going anywhere: there is nowhere for it to go. Those who think there is, and also those who think that when it arrives, so to say, the state and politics will wither away. We are wrong to think of storms blowing the ship off course or making it limit to stay afloat—the passengers perpetually insist on new destinations.

In this situation we may face the paradox that the inertia of administration helps to maintain political stability, when governments seem bent on depriving themselves of any sort of negative feedback. "Whatever will" sic there and he'll say, 'Do this!' 'Do that!' and nothing will happen", said Truman. If it were not for the conflicting objectives of different branches of the national government, and for the fact that bureaucrats in responding to instructions behave in ways they think "appropriate" the ship of state would respond ever faster to ever greater movements of the tiller until the passengers were thankful when it sank. But beyond this, civil servants are now themselves clients as well as dispensers of patronage. As *The Times* wrote recently (March 12) of Venezuela, intending a contrast,

> the bureaucracy is by tacit understanding, if not specific design, a great absorber of middle-class manpower. . . . [It] tends to be obsessively concerned with following strict and unbelievably complicated procedures, basically designed to ensure that everybody has a reason for being at work, but proving a severe obstacle to decision-making and speedy execution.

It will be interesting to see how far the enlargement of a second order of bureaucrats—those employed to assess and reorganize the work of others—can go, and what the effect will be.

Professor Rose comes round to the opinion, not surprising in the aftermath of Watergate, that the founding Fathers "built institutions of government that, on balance, are better designed to accommodate the multiple and conflicted objectives of the American people today than any institutions that could be designed by an architect of authoritarian or democratic persuasion". What we need, in short, is not the tuning for greater efficiency, but some slack in the system, as we do in the gears of such enterprises as MbO.

Enough of Green
Anne Stevenson

When *Correspondences* and *Travelling Behind Glass* were published in 1974, *The T.L.S.* said that they were 'remarkable for a fresh, authentic brand of realist observation and an impressive capacity to reflect intelligently on what it sees'. The setting of many of the poems in this new collection is Scottish and their language is the American English of a writer who has made a strength of an outsider's distinct vision.
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The ordeal of fire

By Michael Howard

HOLGER KLEIN (Editor):
The First World War in Fiction
246pp. Macmillan. £8.95.

MICHAEL S. REYNOLDS:
Hemingway's First War
The Making of "A Farewell to Arms"
309pp. Princeton University Press. £9.40.

On the face of it, the subject of war should be a good test of the quality of a writer: good not only because the extreme situations which it involves should purge away all triviality and insincerity, but because, like romantic love, it provides a common experience, to which the differing reactions of writers reveal as much about their personalities and cultural backgrounds as about their talents. The historian as well as the literary analyst can learn from comparing the reactions to much the same hellish situations, of Edmund Blunden, Henri Barbusse, Ernst Jünger, and Erich Maria Remarque. And although only a minority of writers during the First World War shared the ordeal of the Western Front, a very large number of them experienced in common that subjection to arbitrary authority, that alienation from civilian values and that forced comradeship with men of completely different backgrounds which constitute the real *servitudes militaires*. If a writer has serious talents, this experience should be a sound test of them.

The idea of bringing together studies of twenty writers from half a dozen countries whose experiences in the First World War resulted in serious works of fiction is therefore a good one, and Holger Klein's editorial introduction shows him to have the conceptual grasp, both literary and historical, to weave together from all this material a work of analysis which both historians and literary specialists would welcome. But an anthology is not the way to do this. However carefully the editor chooses his topics and his contributors, the result can never be more than a scrapbook of uneven quality, from which the reader must create his own synthesis or at least quarry his own raw materials. It would be unfair to complain that the image of the war itself, refracted through the lens first of imaginative writers and then that of a dozen literary critics, emerges so blurred as to be unrecognizable. This is a book, not about the war, but about writers who wrote about the war. But even the gigantic common experience of the war is not enough to make in itself a satisfactory book about, to choose at random, R. H. Mottram, John Dos Passos, Marinetti and Karl Kraus. For this one needs a single eye.

But there are excellent things in the book. The editor's introduction J. P. Stern on Ernst Jünger and Malcolm Bradbury on Ford Madox Ford are essays of real distinction. Brian Rowley successfully rehabilitates Erich Maria Remarque as a serious writer. W. D. Redfern, Christopher Wagstaff and Jonathan Dale, in their studies of Giono, Marinetti and Drieu la Rochelle explore reactions to the war very unfamiliar to the English liberal tradition. All the contributors appear to share the aversion to war which one would expect from their cultural background. But the eclecticism of their studies reveals very clearly that this liberal English revulsion was not the literary norm, and that the roots of fascism were nurtured, not only by the joy in violence celebrated by Jünger and Marinetti, but by the bitter cleavage between "front" and "home" by the mutual loyalties of front-line fighters who, feeling themselves betrayed by authority and ignored by the rest of society, were set apart for ever by experiences, which they could never fully communicate.

The Red Badge of Courage is one of the greatest of war books but Stephen Crane had no experience of war at all. Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* was no less a work of creative imagination, though Hemingway arrived in Italy too late to take part in the rout of Caporetto of which he wrote such an astonishing description. His own experience of war was confined to a few weeks, not even on the front which he described. Michael Reynolds, in *Hemingway's First War*, has written a superb literary detective story, tracing Hemingway's sources in newspapers and historical works, digging out the originals of his characters and showing the lengths to which Hemingway went to ensure the accuracy of every incident he described. Hemingway's stature as a First World War writer thus rests on imaginative empathy as much as on historical experience. But he could on occasion provide the voice for a generation. The same passage is quoted by Mr Reynolds and by Michael Garrety, in his essay on Hemingway in *The First World War in Fiction*:

> I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of the places had dignity . . . Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates.

This was to be the shorthand in which the survivors would communicate with one another: a code which the rest of the world would never fully understand.

Like peace, only more so

By Vernon Scannell

PETER G. JONES:
War and the Novelist
Appraising the American War Novel
260pp. Columbia: University of Missouri Press. $12.50.

Peter G. Jones, author of *War and the Novelist*, possesses unusual qualifications for the writing of such a book, for he is a serving Lieutenant-Colonel in the United States Army who—and I quote from the jacket—"earned his MA at Columbia University and his PhD at New York University in 1970". The scope of his survey is less comprehensive than his title suggests: "war" covers the Second World War, Korea and Vietnam, and the novelists examined in detail are all American authors of works published between 1944 and 1968. Colonel Jones sets out to substantiate his belief that "there is a growing parallel between modern technological warfare and the quality of contemporary life" and that "the war novel is a logical medium for writing about life".

He divides his book into five main sections—"The War Novel as *Bildungsroman*", "The Literature of Command", "Sexuality and Violence in the War Novel", "The Psychology of Combat", and a chapter on the work of Kurt Vonnegut; and, while much of it is provocative and some informative, his approach betrays certain weaknesses, the most crippling of which is his failure to treat novels as literature but to deal with them as if they were philosophical or psychological treatises in testaments, to make, in fact, the not uncommon mistake of critics—the confusion of art with discourse.

It is true that war does show man in situations of extremity that might tell us something of value about human nature and conduct in general, something of man's capacity for love, hate, betrayal, courage, cowardice and self-sacrifice, but war is also a distorting and mainly reductive situation, and the view shared by Colonel Jones which regards war as a mean analogue for society or civilization must not overlook the fact that in time of war many of the most cherished values of civilized man are reversed, that behaviour which in peacetime would be regarded by society as evil and destructive becomes virtuous and noble: reluctance to kill, for example, becomes contemptible, and refusal becomes punishably criminal.

It is significant, too, that Colonel Jones in his chapter on sexuality and violence does not seem to notice how the woman's role in the novels he examines is relegated to the camp-following whore or the shadowily idealized "girl back home" and, elsewhere and more surprisingly, since he is a professional soldier, he fails to see the marked differences between military and civilian bureaucracy and power: for, unlike civilian government, the military hierarchy and establishment is unchanging and unchangeable; it cannot be overthrown or even seriously challenged. Mutiny in the services is rare but possible: revolution impossible. "To move from civilian society into a war is not, after all, to change the milieu significantly", states Colonel Jones, but everything we know of war and peace tells us that he is wrong and the very novels that he is discussing surely confirm that he is mistaken.

What most undermines at least one reader's confidence in the author of *War and the Novelist* is his lack of literary judgment, his blindness to the incongruity of many of his references and intended parallels, and a massive humourlessness. He writes of the young soldier's experience of military service as being at initiation and a quest, invoking Jessie Weston's *The Quest of the Holy Grail* and *From Ritual to Romance*, and Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* as unlikely matrices for *From Here to Eternity*, *Why We're in Vietnam?* and *Catch-22*, which is often and equally surprising source of war fiction. This lack is closely related to his failure to treat novels as works of art and to distinguish between the admirable and the mediocre or worse when discussing the formidable number of American war novels he deals with. He does not often attempt value-judgments but when he does he comes up with some verdicts that are likely to provoke less agreement than amazement. "In spite of some weaknesses", Colonel Jones tells us, "*From Here to Eternity* is the best American war novel, one of the finest novels of the 20th Century".

His own style, too, does little to strengthen confidence in his critical reliability, varying as it does from the strangulated argot of transatlantic academe to something less familiar but, to me, utterly incomprehensible, like this, for instance:

> Saturated by the powerful forces of nature under the poles, steeped in and permeated by the overgauss of the force-field of Earth, the boy's [*sic*] fractured adolescent minds are welded to a new manic perfection. The experience provides the final animal voltage necessary to send them over the military crest of manhood, ever by stern "Take-ass" standards.

It is a pity about those lapses because some interesting questions are raised in *War and the Novelist*, though few are satisfactorily answered. The best war fiction, like the best war poetry, is valuable because it gives us something that other means of communication—historical accounts, of campaigns, films, contemporary diaries and official documents cannot supply: the quality, the texture of feeling, the sense of what it was really like for the men to witness and endure those terrible events. War novels may do other things as well, such as make political statements and criticisms, celebrate or lament; they may function on other levels than that of realism, including the allegorical, but unless they succeed in the primary purpose of compelling the reader's assent through their artistry they will not succeed at all. Another Jones, David, author of *In Parenthesis*, probably the finest single literary work dealing with war in the twentieth century, said in the preface to his masterpiece:

> I have only tried to make a shape in words, using as data the complex of sights, sounds, fears, hopes, apprehensions, smells, things exterior and interior, the landscape and paraphernalia of that singular time and of those particular men.

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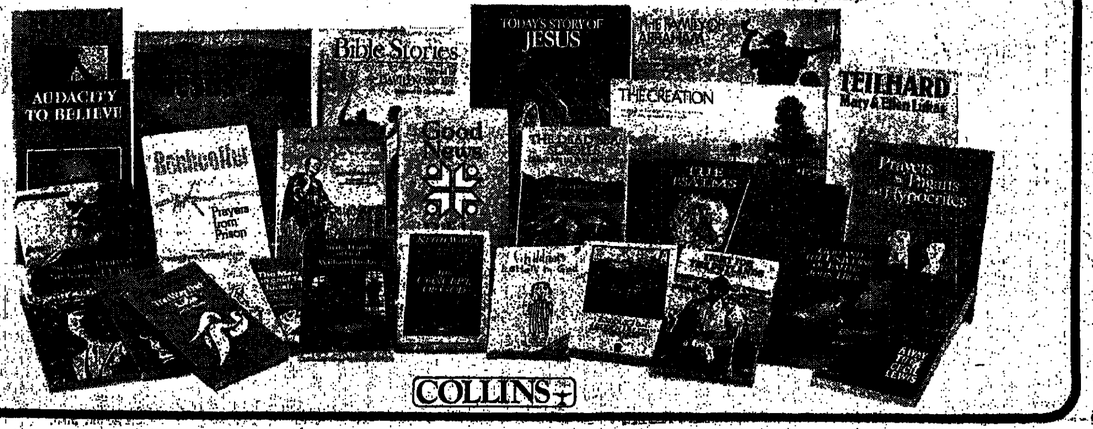
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Scrap by scrap

By Douglas Sealy

AIDAN HIGGINS :
Scenes from a Receding Past
203pp. Calder. £4.95.

One of Aidan Higgins's epigraphs is taken from Richard Brautigan: "I've been examining half-scraps of my childhood. They are pieces of distant life that have no form or meaning. They are things that just happened, like that." As if following Mr Brautigan's recipe, Mr Higgins has made a collection of half-scraps from which one gathers that a certain Dan Ruttle, son of the local vet, grows up in the Irish country-side, goes to the local primary school, and to a secondary school run by a religious order. He undergoes the normal torments of Irish adolescent boys, worries about girls, studies photographs of nudes and masturbates frequently. He has a brother who has a nervous breakdown. His mother breaks down also. Scene is cut into scene at random and occasional restatements remind the reader of the formlessness and meaninglessness of it all. An evening with the snapshots and scrap album of a total stranger would be as interesting.

The book is set in Sligo, but an author's note tells us that Sligo town is (or was) Celbridge. Celbridge is where the author was born, so he appears to be inviting us to identify him with Dan Ruttle, and when he writes, in the persona of Dan Ruttle, "I detest my accent . . . I hate my upbringing . . . I hate my rustic ignorance", perhaps he is hinting at a motive for publishing these notes and jottings. He was the man, he suffered and he was there and he hopes to exorcize his hated memories by the therapy of print. Only masturbation in the cattle-trough tempts him to become lyrical: "with a fine impartiality, I scatter my seed in loft and barn, outhouse and toolshed, into grain and wet grass, dry leaves and river sand, in that cow's hind bed, but mostly and with keenest pleasure under water". Strangely enough, he does not seem to have been afraid of becoming mad or impotent or anaemic—even in the Irish midlands there has been progress since Victorian times.

After that lovingly described or invented interlude the scrap album takes over again: a verbal snapshot of his parents' wedding; a clothes list for La Sainte Union Convent; two pages from the score book for the Fifth Test, Oval, August 20, 22, 23, 1938, together with a map of Hutton's scoring strokes; details of school regimen and slang; and his brother's favourite wireless programmes before his breakdown. "The years rolled on. Time went by". The author, or Mr Ruttle, sees Senator W. B. Yeats on a Dublin street and follows him into a cinema showing a film of the occult. Three-quarters of the way through the great man leaves. A touching little vignette, succeeded by the routes of the 12 and 18 buses and a bold-faced strumpet in a leopardskin toque: "Oh the lure of fur-clad young women, particularly in the morning! Particularly in the rain!"

About a quarter of the book remains. An attractive girl appears who is to become Ruttle's wife, though for no apparent reason. He tells us about her past, "more real" than his own, and the blurb cries: "the author's change of style from the first person to a historical third in describing her is a daring stylistic innovation". It is neither an innovation nor is it daring. The girlfriend/mistress/wife has had and will have no shortage of admirers. Glimpses of her past and present life are jolted together between bits of Ruttle's. The writing varies between the peremptorily factual and the lingeringly poetic. The girl belongs neither to the world of fact nor to the world of fiction, but moves in an unsatisfactory limbo in between. She loses her baby in the second week of her fifth month. The lovers plan to set out for Greece and a new life. . . .

In *Langrishe, Go Down* Mr Higgins by force of imagination created an unforgettable picture of a decaying family. The style was rich, allusive, suggestive. He has now twisted the neck of his early writing, boiled the body down and what is left is a crenkling skeleton, partly disjointed, with gobbets of flesh still adhering to the bones here and there. *Scenes from a Receding Past* contains the material for an autobiography or a novel as an artist's sketch pad contains material for a picture. Mixed perhaps, by an *ignis fatuus* of modernity, Mr Higgins has presented us with leaves from the sketch pad and neglected to paint a picture. Life, he may wish to imply, is made of such scattered leaves, but books are not life nor does a novelist's notebook make a novel.

Goldrush

PENELOPE FITZGERALD :
The Golden Child
159pp. Duckworth. £4.95.

When the Golden Treasure of the Garemantes is put on exhibition at the museum, it not only attracts an immense number of visitors, but also causes a great deal of trouble, turning eventually into tragedy, for Waring Smith, a junior exhibition officer, Sir William Livingstone Simpkin, who discovered the treasure in 1913, the museum's director, Sir John Allison, who knows all that a man can know about French porcelain and silver, Professor Untermensch, author of the coloscript, *Garamantischengeheimschriftenduschiffriarkunst*, and a number of other equally interesting, if less learned characters. Penelope Fitzgerald's novel is lively, witty and well-written. Among its more amusing exhibits are a package tour to the USSR and some Garamantian hieroglyphics, put to ingenious use.

T. J. Binyon

Pulling the wool

By Michael Mason

JOHN FOWLES :
Daniel Martin
704pp. Cape. £4.95.

Perhaps even the proofreaders of this novel became, understandably, bored by it, for it contains an unusual number of misprints. One of these does at least provide a touch of something that John Fowles's fiction has always been desperately short of: namely, humour ("He lifted a hand and cupped the small breasts together, then moved it up to turn her face and boby"). Having a sense of humour is connected with having a sense of what is dignified and what isn't: the jokeless wastes of Fowles's fiction are also gawky and indecorous. He makes his medium an ugly, graceless thing. Here is a characteristic passage from *Daniel Martin*:

> Jenny had too much sense, too close an attachment to the freedoms of her generation, ever to deny herself the full potentialities of her future . . . and however hard I might have tried to subvert her from them. She had, or sometimes pretended with me that she had, a jejune notion that she had seen it all; that I was, as she brutally (too brutally to be convincing) estimated, the best she was likely to get. But that was a nonsense passing time must explode. I had no right to encourage such an illusion; and I categorically had no wish to pick up the emotional tab when it was shattered.

And so it goes on, for 700 pages. The language here is woolly, and sometimes downright wrong. The punctuation is lazy and inconsistent (the three dots are in Fowles's text). The imagery is horribly uncoordinated. The syntax is incoherent, or at best turbid. This is not just the rough, lustreless manner of Iris Murdoch: only someone with an extraordinarily thick stylistic skin could have written that passage.

There were qualities in some of Fowles's previous novels which made the style worth enduring. Fowles can tell a story in a very compelling way. In particular he has a long suit in the vivid spatial arrangement of a narrative. But *Daniel Martin* does not even redeem itself in this area, for it does not have a chance to. This novel is more a work of self-analysis and would-be philosophy than anything Fowles has published since *The Aristos*. It deals with the youth and middle age of a hero whose life overlaps unmistakably with the author's. Daniel Martin is an Oxford graduate turned Hollywood scriptwriter who spends some of his time in a country retreat in the west of England, and has ambitions to be a novelist.

His story is encrusted with long passages on modern life, Englishness, art, Marxism, and so forth. Fowles the sage was another unwelcome presence in the previous fiction which the reader could sometimes manage to ignore. Here he is sickeningly inescapable. Like the worst kind of homespun philosopher he buttonholes you with half-baked pet ideas:

> Just as "I believe in God" is generally a synonym for "I believe in not thinking", only too frequently "I love you" is a euphemism for "I want to own you".

For "just as" read "in a remotely and trivially similar fashion". There is an affront to the serious reader of fiction in the author's assumption that he or she will have any time for such mentally lax stuff as this.

In his fiction Fowles lays claim to wisdom in another sense, to expertise of various kinds about the setting of his books. By thickening his descriptions in this way he is using a time-honoured and important device for verisimilitude. In his last novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the much-paraded research on the Victorian setting was so slipshod that it would have disgraced a potboiling historical romance from Hollywood. The several displays of expertise (Turkish carpets, history, Ancient Egypt, and so on) in *Daniel Martin* seem more reliable, although "water dropwort" (a characteristically ostentatious botanical allusion) would probably not have been seen flowering on the Cherwell by students revising for their finals.

The French Lieutenant's Woman also made much of a ready-made experimentalism in the narration. In the new novel there is some play with first and third-person treatments of the hero (deep mysteries about "identity" thus being gestured at—and evaded). It is broadly hinted, in a kind of lumpen salute to *Finnegans Wake*, that the first sentence of Fowles's book is also the last sentence of Daniel Martin's imaginary first novel. These devices will catch the eye, but they are no more than fashionable ornament crudely applied to a narrative that remains shapeless, and much too long.

Continental drift

By Anita Brookner

COLLEEN McCULLOUGH :
The Thorn Birds
533pp. Macdonald and Jane's. £4.95.

"Something I can get my teeth into", the woman in the library said to me the other day. The analogy with eating is fairly important, as is the grass-roots conviction that novels should be long, pleasurable, and nourishing. *The Thorn Birds*, a saga of love, money, adventure and disaster in the Australian outback, has arrived in time to save a sizable part of the population from malnutrition.

Of course it will be publicized as Australia's answer to *Gone with the Wind* and of course it contains vast areas of tosh, although those interested in role reversal will notice that the petulance and whimsy that made life at Tara so taxing have taken an unexpected turn. "I'll make you writhe", says malevolent chatelaine Mary Carson to her parish priest, Father (later Cardinal) Ralph de Bricassart, who for no very good reason has taken off all his clothes and stands before her like a statue by Praxiteles: "You're the most fascinating man I've ever met. You throw your beauty in our teeth, contemptuous of our foolishness. But I'll pin you to the wall on your own weakness, I'll make you sell yourself like any painted whore. Do you doubt it?"

This is not merely bad writing; it is true innocence, and it should be respected. For Colleen McCullough, who is not yet a professional novelist but is every inch a story-teller, shares the same appetites as the average reader and indeed does much to satisfy them. Innocence and generosity transform this chronicle of three women into something that is very close to compulsive reading. And it is the sort of reading that kept people happy before the advent of the television serial, a blockbusting yarn that has very little to do with the way we live now. For all its lavishness, the underlying ethic is a stern one. Miss McCullough is at her most authentic when she describes the vicissitudes of work and the character of landscape. Praxiteles Ralph is a dead bore; the love scenes have the awesome imprecision of Lord Peter Wimsey's honeymoon and it is clear that they have been imposed on a story which is mainly a territorial rather than a sexual odyssey. When describing the eminent churchman's escapades, which somehow do not stand in the way of his career at the Vatican, Miss McCullough seems to be leaning rather heavily on *La Faune de Public Mouret*; when describing the agonies of cane-cutting in North Queensland, she is most vividly herself.

The novel is a weird mixture of unusual description and concocted incident. No summary could do justice to the plot and might in any case lend itself too easily to parody. Suffice it to say that the women are indomitable, the men unreliable, the territory formidable, and the cash turnover immense. We are allowed the comfort of a complete disregard for the norm. Millions of pounds are bequeathed, hundreds of thousands of acres owned, continents crossed in journeys lasting for days. Nor are we denied the pleasure of precise detail. The papal legate's afternoon tea consists of cucumber sandwiches, pink and white fairy cakes, and scones with jam and cream. Rather more splendidly, the hero's mother retains nothing of her original station in life except "the spinet, the Persian carpets, the Louis Quinze sofa and chairs, the Regency escritoire". It is something of an achievement—in fact it is a considerable achievement—that no one could read this book simply for an easy laugh. Discrepancies of scale disappear in the relentless onward march of the narrative and at the end, which, it must be said, is far too long delayed, are not much remembered. It is in fact a good bad book, and it deserves a suspension of the critical faculties. It will give the woman in the public library something to get her teeth into at last.

And I suspect that it is not exclusively a woman's book. A reaction is long overdue to the sort of novella now being written by women for other women, all of them apparently out of temper. Despite Miss McCullough's scorn for her male protagonists, there is no sexism in her argument, and there may indeed be a kind of homestead revival in her readership. According to her publishers, the author has worked as a neurophysiologist but is now exploring new ventures elsewhere (the idiom is catching). If this novel is a mere sideline I suggest we all stick with her. She is clearly extraordinary in a way both men and women can admire, and her own story may turn out to be even more of an achievement than this obvious best-seller.

Claude Simon's *Triptych*, now translated by Helen Lane (171pp. Calder, £5.50), was originally reviewed in the *TLS* of March 23, 1973. "It might seem perverse for a novelist as supremely good as Claude Simon at turning the visible into the legible to be also given to the cold and methodical disillusionments of the *nouveau roman*", the review began. "But the one follows from the other: when naturalism is so densified and seductive there is a doubly pressing need to expose its artificiality, to show that mental representations are mental representations and not windows on the real world. What is missing from them is reality's one vital property: movement. . . . The best representation can manage . . . is a succession of tableaux vivants, and this is a particularly obnoxious substitute because it makes time seem divisible. Escapism of this sort will not do and by forever showing divisibility up for what it is—a convention, or fiction—Simon is giving us the bad news: that real time is indivisible and leads only to the grave."

Heads that go bump

By Charles Wheeler

WILLIAM SAFIRE :
Full Disclosure
560pp. Hutchinson. £4.95.

Like so many other amateur politicians who spent their middle years in orbit around the thirty-seventh President of the United States, William Safire was an advertising man. His lucky break came in 1959, when, as PRO to a firm of kitchen manufacturers, then exhibiting in Moscow, he found himself acting as cheerleader to the spokesman of the Free World as Richard Nixon debated with Nikita Khrushchev. For some years afterwards, Mr Safire pursued his public relations on the fringes of big business and high politics, representing both Nelson Rockefeller and a top-selling laxative. He came to rest, after service with Spiro Agnew in the presidential campaign of 1968, in a White House office, as Number Three on Mr Nixon's staff of sixteen speechwriters. Some of his drafts are remembered to this day: during the midterm election of 1970 he wrote a frenzied law and order speech for President Nixon that was later said to have lost the Republican Party millions of votes. But Mr Safire survived; he remained at the White House until the pressures of Watergate became intolerable in 1973. He is now self-employed.

All too obviously, it is the aftermath of Watergate that has inspired this deadeningly long-winded political adventure story. Like earlier masters of the genre, John Erlichman and Spiro Agnew, Mr Safire has built a central character out of parts of recently rejected presidents, surrounded his hero with a type-cast set (of aides) and fleshed out his novel with indiscriminate doses of intrigue, corruption, hunger for power, violence and sex.

His president, Sven Ericson, is a man with a secret disability, contracted as a candidate and never disclosed to the people. He is prone to temporary loss of sight, brought on by banging his head against walls while sleeping in railway compartments with ladies of the White House press corps. His first summit visit to Russia coincides with a struggle for power in the Kremlin. He travels in a helicopter with General Secretary Kolkov who has been marked down for assassination by the Soviet foreign minister. Mongolian mercenaries fire rockets from an escort helicopter. Kolkov's machine crashes in a Crimean game park. Kolkov is killed. The Mongolians are dismembered by wild boar. President Ericson merely bumps his head. But he wakes up to find he cannot see.

All this is rousing stuff and may well make several stirring episodes on television. But we are only an eighth of the way through the book. With Ericson's return to the White House, and his decision to remain in office, the story starts to sag. Deprived of Mongolian Batmen and Crimean boar, the reader is left on the Washington treadmill, contemplating the Twenty-fifth Amendment to the Constitution, which deals with disabled presidents, and an endless procession of politicians and camp followers, all of them either trying to do the president down, or prop him up.

At the end, Mr Safire abandons even the pretence of original thought. President Ericson calls his staff into the East Room of the White House, makes a farewell speech that reduces all assembled to tears, and steps out on the lawn as the Marine band plays "Hail to the Chief". "They're playing our song", he whispers to his successor. Then he removes his tinted glasses, dries his eyes, waves . . . and follows his seeing-eye dog up the helicopter steps.

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On the stately home front

By Violet Powell

JAMES LEES-MILNE :
Prophesying Peace
253pp. Chatto and Windus. £6.50.

As Historic Buildings Secretary of the National Trust, James Lees-Milne developed his natural gift for observation in the course of his duties. If *Prophesying Peace*, the second volume of his diary, is less deeply personal than its predecessor *Ancestral Voices*, it is equally evocative in its account of the terrifying moments and comic interludes which marked the last two years of the Second World War. In particular those who knew London during these years will recognize a faithful portrait, as vivid in its way as any newsreel, of London at war.

Prophecies have always been popular in wartime, but the ones here recorded are mostly remarkable for their unfulfilment. An exception was that of the singer and social figure Olga Lynn, who came near a bull's-eye by prophesying in 1939 that the war would be over in the spring of 1945. The diarist himself was justified in his apprehension at the threat of the Russian advance across Europe, and in prophesying that infinite troubles were inevitable, but his views on promising writers were less perspicacious. Others to whom he talked made political forecasts that were ludicrously wrong, among them being that of a general, closely attached to Montgomery, who foresaw no surrender and a period of prolonged guerrilla warfare in Germany.

Against this background, James Lees-Milne had the harrowing occupation of trying to cope almost single-handed with the future of many of the historic houses of England. Harrowing is an only too appropriate word, for not a few of the owners had suddenly found themselves to be aged, heirless and with no staff to halt the progress of decay. Although, like the boy in Belloc's *Cautionary Tales* (his name was also Jim), these harassed hosts frequently gave him "tea and cakes and jam,/And slices of delicious ham", he often had the pain of telling them that it would be impracticable for the National Trust to accept the home they were struggling to save.

At Shaw's Corner, on the other hand, the door was opened by a maid in uniform, and Bernard Shaw treated the question of the National Trust's taking over the unbeautiful 1902 villa with cheerful realism. Shaw, regardless of the ugliness of his own home, also recommended Thomas Hardy's house, Max Gate, as a suitable subject for demolition; a judgment with which it is hard to quarrel—at least on aesthetic grounds. As a set piece, the visit to Shaw is one of the most striking in the diary. The octogenarian obviously enjoyed his visitor's company, a yellow tie and a pink collar suggesting that Shaw had taken some trouble to dress for the occasion.

Immediately after this visit, bombing attacks started again on London, to be followed by the exhilarating news of the D-Day invasion. Hardly was there time for rejoicing at its initial success before London and the south-east began to be bombarded by V1 rockets, the diarist's windows being blown out with maddening frequency. Among the friends to saw constantly Lady Cunard showed both her best and her worst side more extremely than most, screaming down the telephone at the unhappy staff of the Dorchester Hotel, but refusing to leave her suite on an upper floor when bombs were falling. Friends came back from abroad, sometimes as escaped prisoners of war, or went overseas after a farewell that might be final.

To intrude personally on the subject of Jim Lees-Milne's friends, I am glad to find that he has left a memorial to the bravery which won Hamish Erskine the Military Cross, and also to the dazzling beauty of Bridget Parsons. His friendship from boyhood with the Mitford family gave him the opportunity of experiencing the full blast of Peter Rodd's intensely trying personality, and to witness Nancy Mitford's struggle to cope with such an impossible husband.

Towards the end of the war the diarist introduced John Fowler, most fashionable of interior decorators, to Margaret Jourdain, famous as an expert on English furniture. All three returned to the Kend[illegible]ton flat which Margaret Jourd[illegible] shared with the novelist I[illegible] Compton-Burnett. Mr Fowler [illegible] *obviously staggered* by the [illegible] sically plain walls and the finel[illegible] underfoot, a stark background [illegible] a few good pieces of furnitu[illegible] collected by Margaret Jourdain.

John Fowler was also of [illegible] party which James Lees-Milne to[illegible] to inspect the grotto at Oathe[illegible] Park, a wonderful construction [illegible] chambers decorated with glitteri[illegible] stalactites, and even a bathroo[illegible] rich in mussel shells and conch[illegible] This visit was made in 1944, wh[illegible] some exterior damage had be[illegible] done, giving an excuse for [illegible] deplorable sequel. Denton Welch whose *Journals* have a delicacy [illegible] perception sometimes also to [illegible] found in *Prophesying Peace*, reco[illegible]ded the destruction of Oathla[illegible] grotto in 1948. Incensed, he made comment which James Lees-Mil[illegible] must often have found to be tru[illegible] "How wonderful it must be to [illegible] on the side of the destroyers. Alm[illegible] everything sooner or later will f[illegible] into your lap."

However, though the diarist s[illegible] sorrowfully of Kedleston as "doomed anachronism", *everythi[illegible] did not fall into the lap of th[illegible]* destroyers. There were oth[illegible] houses, such as Plas Newydd [illegible] Anglesey and Petworth in Susse[illegible] which, after initially discouragin[illegible] interviews, were eventually, wit[illegible] his help, steered into the care o[illegible] the National Trust.—The Lo[illegible] Leconfield who when owned Pe[illegible]worth showed a particularly [illegible] accommodating spirit, only [illegible] bending when the inspection wa[illegible] over to tell his visitor that an exce[illegible] lent tea could be got at a tea-sho[illegible] outside the gates, which Mr Lee[illegible] Milne was to put down to Lor[illegible] Leconfield. From where they stoo[illegible] a notice saying CLOSED was clearl[illegible] visible in the tea-shop window.

The diary ceases six weeks afte[illegible] the end of the war in the Far Eas[illegible] its writer finding that he wishe[illegible] to write no further. Those wh[illegible] have not read *Ancestral Voice[illegible]* might, perhaps, wish for the fu[illegible] notes, which gave what may [illegible] called the cast list in that volume but in *Prophesying Peace* this [illegible] is balanced by the excellence of t[illegible] index—National Trust properti[illegible] very rightly, appearing in capita[illegible]

Having a good war

By E. S. Turner

ERIC WHELPTON :
The Making of an Englishman
160pp. Bachman and Turner. £3.95.

Born in 1894, brought up in France in the Belle Epoque, Eric Whelpton published the first instalment of his autobiography in 1974, under the title *The Making of a European*. It described his agreeably cosmopolitan life up to 1926, when he gave up writing and publishing an English newspaper in Fascisti-ridden Florence. His present publisher introduces him as one who was "pursued by Dorothy L. Sayers with passionate ardour" (his own version was that "her manner to me was protective and almost maternal") and says that he is "sometimes regarded as the prototype for Lord Peter Wimsey" (which this he concurs). She plays no part in this second volume.

In Florence Mr Whelpton had lived in "a well-furnished flat of twenty rooms in a large palazzo . . . looked after by four servants". In Putney, for the same rent, he and his first wife occupied a small flat converted from a billiards room.

He was now a reluctant schoolmaster at King's College School, where the common-room talk fell far short of that of the Reggie Turner circle beside the Arno. English schoolboys, he feels, would benefit by contact with men with adult minds who keep in touch with the outside world. "Better, I should have thought, to be taught by a master with an intelligent mistress than one with a straight bat."

As well as teaching, he wrote articles and, read for publishers. But London in the 1930s was disappointing after the life of Europe and the reader may find the account of it disappointing too. There is too much girding at "provincial middle-class politeness" and the "Hampstead establishment". Whenever possible the author set off across the Channel, sometimes as a travel courier in summer. As a traveller he was a train-and-boat man and did not mind finding himself in a dormitory cabin with nineteen rabbits, as happened once at Trieste. Even after the Second World War broke out he contrived, with help from the French cultural attaché, to pay two visits to Paris, on one of which he was taken to dine with Admiral Darlan's mistress but failed to abate her antagonism to the British.

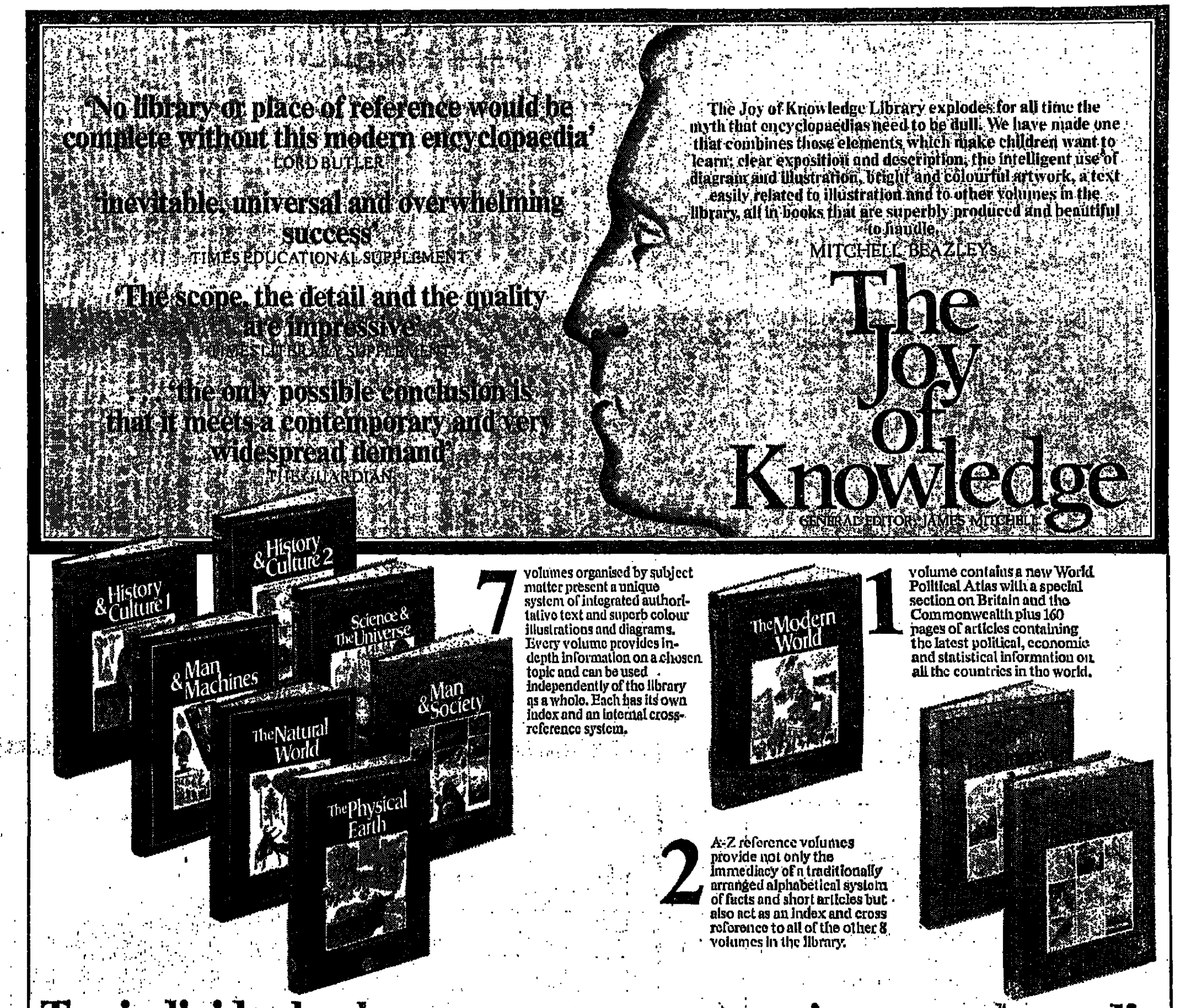
With the war under way, the book brightens up. After giving "some hundreds" of broadcasts in French he joined the War Office in 1942 as a specialist in Italian affairs and was later commissioned in the Intelligence Corps with a view to joining the Eighth Army in Tripoli. He was now a member of that "fortunate and multitudinous group, the Writers and Artists in Uniform. They cropped up in every theatre of operations; in intelligence, in field security, in political warfare, as war correspondents, as editors of forces newspapers, as arts specialists and much else. To the main they had "a good war", lived well, saw strange lands and survived to write books about their adventures. They preferred not to live in messes and often clashed with regulars, who expected them to exact salutes and even perform such tedious military duties as mounting guards. They could be exasperating.

Eric Whelpton reached Tripoli by way of Sierra Leone, Nigeria, the French Cameroons, the Congo, the Sudan and Egypt, all good grist for the writer's mill. What his duties were in Tripoli, other than to carry out "investigations and researches" we do not discover; it was outside his function to interrogate Italian prisoners, though he obtained permission to enter the cages in order to brush up his dialects. "I, Tunis", he writes, "I was having such a good war that I was obsessed with a sense of guilt and shame when I met so many who were bound to be killed."

It was outside his function, also, to hunt down Fascist villains, though he tried in vain to track crooked administrator in Sicily as had to be content with smashing the furniture in his flat (was that an act of a Wimsey?).

Back in Britain, the author finds that his ignorance of military matters prevented him carrying out his duties efficiently and he was transferred to Political Intelligence, in which role he filed reports on economic and political conditions in Southern Italy. His work was "highly interesting", but "the mere fact that my reports were accurate aroused the enmity of a number of 'camp followers' of high rank". The narrative ends in 1945.

In his earlier volume Mr Whelpton admits a tendency to bolster surprising things he is told, "for I am a kind of twentieth-century Candide". He passes on some strange "inside stories" in this pages. There are repetitions of mis-spellings which should have been spotted and the authorship of *Arabia Deserta* is ascribed to some body called Douglas. But the strength of the book is the author's part in the life of foreign parts and in meeting eccentric characters (like the father-in-law who, because of family objections to his rustling of *The Times* at the breakfast table, cut it into strips to read). Though the book is called *The Making of an Englishman* it is evident enough that the author remains a thoroughpaced European.



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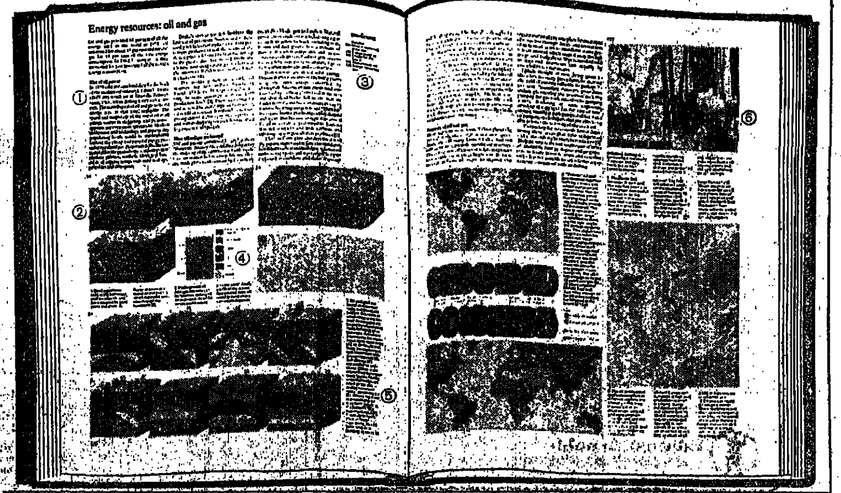
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Memories of Nabokov

By Alfred Appel, Jr

I am thinking of aureoles and angels, the secret of durable pigments, prophetic sonnets, the refuge of art. And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita. (Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*.)

In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce writes: "It darkels . . . all this our funnaminal world." This is not very tough going for the *Wake*: "darkels" = dark + sparkles; "funnaminal" = phenomenal + fundamental + fun animal, the "*sublime Dubliners*". Humbert Humbert calls Joyce, and though Wordsmith Nabokov favoured verbal effects and games more openly grounded and mobile than those of *Finnegans Wake* (the finest car in *Ada* is a "Jolls-Joyce"), he might have created that pun cluster from the *Wake* as part of a valedictory statement quite uniquely his. Was Kafka a "fun animal", as it were? Proust certainly was not, in his cork-lined room. But Vladimir Nabokov was, preeminently, and I am going to remember my teacher and friend as he lived—a great and most resilient celebrant of life. My remarks, then, will be for the most part in the Irish spirit of a wake. And if by "Irish" we mean an open and unfettered enjoyment of the world, then Vladimir Nabokov was more Irish than James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* Nabokov revered more than any novel except *Anna Karenina*. These two novels, along with "The Metamorphosis" and *Swann's Way*, were always the highlights of Nabokov's annual spring lecture course, to which I will now turn.

The scene: well-worn lecture room "B", Goldwin Smith Hall, Cornell University, May 1954, where Professor Nabokov is lecturing to some 200 undergraduates in Literature 312 (MWF, 12), his Masterpieces of European Fiction course. It is unseasonably warm this particular noon, a torpor has settled over the students; there seems to be a mist rising from fraternity row, the sea of C-minuses at the rear of the room. Professor Nabokov pauses between sentences and then, as if startled by the touch of some invisible hand, looks up from his notes and, in a voice far more intimate than that of our casually formal thespian-lecturer, asks: "Did you hear that? A cicada is singing, perhaps in this room." Suddenly Professor Nabokov has our attention, the sort paid to any harmless fellow when he is about to formulate his madness. "Yes, a cicada. I think it is on that window sill", he says, pointing to the right. "Please check it for us", he asks a young man stumped by the window, who struggles to his white-bucked feet as if roused from a dream. "It's *two* grasshoppers", the student reports, an unwitting straight man for Professor Nabokov, who, playing Groucho Marx to the student's Chico, now lowers his head, peers over his glasses, wide-eyed, and corrugates his brow—a characteristic expression—as if to ask, wordlessly, that painful question: *cicada interrupted?* The class laughs, a breeze stirs. *Homo ludens*, to pin down Nabokov with the proper Latin nomenclature, as befits a distinguished lepidopterist. Man playing, but not frivolously.

"Do you know *how* the cicada makes its music and why?" asks Professor Nabokov, who discerns the collective answer quickly enough, without a show of hands or a secret ballot. He draws the insect on the blackboard, then he explains, and his voice rises in excitement and he stammers as he extends the digression, adding lore about the cicada and information about its appearances in art—the mosaics of Pompeii—and literature; an updated provenance would today include line 182 of the poem "Pale Fire", where "the cicada sings" for John Shade's sixty-first birthday. The student seated to my left is taking notes, furiously. His neighbour on the other side leans over and hisses, "Hey schmoe, whadya doin'? This isn't going to be on the final!" "But it's so interesting, so interesting", answers the note-taker. Nabokov concludes and returns to Joyce. The mists have cleared, and our attention is once again fixed on the details—always the details—of the text under precise taxonomic scrutiny; *Details of a Sunset* (1976) would be the title of his final book. Detail and precision: the cornerstones of any genuine scholarship, obviously, and certainly of Nabokov's greatness as a writer. "I have never known anyone more learned in the literal sense of the term than Vladimir; the quantity, the precision, the depth of his knowledge was an astonishment and a delight", states Arthur Mizener, Nabokov's friend and colleague for a decade, 1949-1959 (see his fine tribute, *Cornell Alumni News*, September 1977).

"As a writer, I am half-painter, half-naturalist" he wrote to me in 1968, and he laboured over each sentence, on one of his famous 3in x 5in index cards, as though he were a medieval miniaturist rather than a nineteenth-century muralist (he himself always favoured visual and painterly metaphors when describing his work, his intentions and procedures). Did Professor Nabokov say that the cicada was best rendered by Dürer? I can't recall, I didn't take notes, *I'm* no schmoe—but I did remember those seven or so minutes a few years later when I read the following in "Time and Ebb", Nabokov's story of 1945: "Attachment and science, resentment and art—the two couples keep to themselves, but when they do meet, nothing else in the world matters." Chapter 6 of *Speak, Memory*, the butterfly chapter, is as joyful as any of several such meetings, or couplings, in his work. "Before the advent of Pushkin and Gogol, European literature was blind", declared Professor Nabokov in his initial lecture on *Dead Souls*, autumn 1953. "It saw color in the hackneyed terms of the ancients: the sky was blue, the dawn red, the foliage green, and the clouds grey, which is meaningless, of course."

Nabokov's own palette—"pul-ette, 'little friend', good name for it", he might have said—his palette as a writer was subtly variegated. In *Speak, Memory*, for instance, he offers "blue-white" (the optical phenomenon of shadows on bright snow), "misty-blue", "purplish-blue", "silvery blue", "cobalt blue", "indigo blue", "azure" "china-blue", "dove-blue", "crystal blue", "ice-bright" (water)—but never, no, certainly not, *never* imprecise, jejune, plain *blue*!—if I may offer a taxonomy in the manner of our subject. And the colour that some of us would recognize, record, and accept as "brown" is transcribed by Nabokov as no less than thirteen different tints and combinations, though it is probably too soon for another *catalogue raisonné* of colours. In *Ada*, half-painter Nabokov writes, "Remembrance, like Rembrandt, is dark and festive." Multicoloured or monochromatic, Nabokov's visual prose emits a glow that is old-fashioned in more than one way, as I'll shortly suggest.

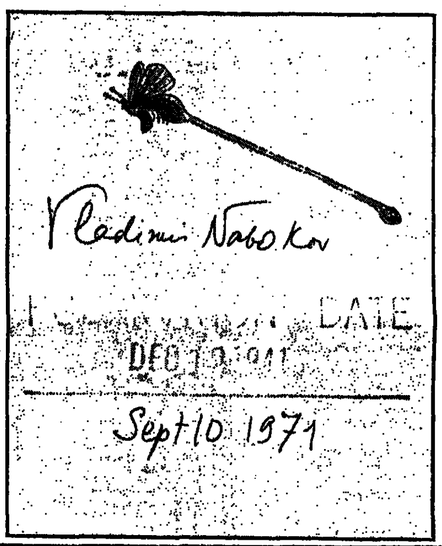
"My task which I am trying to achieve is . . . before all, to make you *see*. That—and no more, and it is everything", stated Joseph Conrad in his famous preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. Nabokov, who early on tided a novella *The Eye* (1930), could do this with a sensuous specificity as exact as any writer of the century—whether he was describing a curds-and-whey cloud formation, a lambent sky, the details of a sunset (see the last paragraph, Chapter 10, *Speak, Memory*).

Yet his landscapes are not isolated set pieces, mere "pretty pictures". Note the penultimate page of *Lolita*, when Humbert looks into the "friendly abyss" where visual beauty and moral truth are perceived simultaneously, an ideal union. All this is basically quite amazing, you know: a cosmopolitan modern writer who even in his darkest works manages to salute, however fleetingly, the sparkling wonders of the natural world. Of all things! Compare Nabokov with the implosive Samuel Beckett, say, or with Borges, whose quotidian is the library. Nabokov was bookish, too, and he esteemed the prose music of Beckett's *Molloy*, but the geography of that extraordinary and most hopeful of Beckett works, with its place names of "Bally", "Hole", and far lower turns on the map ("Turdy", if you must know), serves to underscore further the singular radiance of Nabokov's phenomenal finding. For an example of a contemporary sensibility akin to this aspect of Nabokov's (if examples are instructive) one must turn to another medium, and the silver prints of photographer Ansel Adams (b 1902). "A great artist!" exclaimed Nabokov in 1974, when I showed him several reproductions of Adams's landscapes.

One may see Nabokov's eye in action, quite literally, in the late Robert Hughes's excellent 1965 National Educational Television film about him. In one scene we follow Nabokov as he walks through Montreux Traffic. A news kiosk. A woman making a call inside a lone glass modern telephone booth, her dog waiting impatiently outside. When Nabokov sees the phone booth, he stops, and, biting his lower lip, quickly jots down something in a little notebook—or has he made a sketch?—the surprising intensity of his sudden concentration moving the film viewer to look more carefully at the mundane locus before us. The dog's leash, a taut diagonal extending into the booth, now comes into focus, and the scene is transformed: a dog taking a booth for a walk? or a booth taking a dog for a walk? One suddenly saw too why Nabokov and Saul Steinberg admired each other's work so much. But what *did* Nabokov write in his notebook? Perhaps his inspired entry was merely a reminder to buy more index cards, aspirin, and soap, or, worse yet, it was a meaningless squiggle performed for the eye of the dumb camera—to reassert the spirit of the wake by deflating my (strabismic?) speculations in a manner which duplicates or approaches the way Nabokov often toyed with his audience.

Several memories of Nabokov preserve for me the abundant fun he found or made for himself and others, not to mention his readers. Once, most likely during the winter of 1956, I sat behind the Nabokovs at an Ithaca movie theatre. The picture was *Beat the Devil*, the bizarrely humorous Truman Capote-John Huston shaggy dog thriller. Nabokov was here amused that his loud laughter became conspicuous immediately. Véra Nabokov murmured "*Volodya!*" a few times but then gave up as it became clear that two comic fields of force had been established in the theatre: those who were laughing at the movie, and those who were laughing at (nameless) Nabokov laughing at the movie. At one juncture in the film, actor Peter Lorre approaches an artist who is painting a portrait of a man. Lorre studies the picture, a profile view, and then complains, in his famous nasal whine, "That doesn't look like him. It has only one ear!" Nabokov exploded—that is the only verb—with laughter. It seemed to lift him from his seat, "higher and higher, like old . . . Nijinski, like Old Faithful"—I exaggerate, of course, but I'm quoting from the description in *Lolita* of Quilty's response to Humbert's initially harmless yet stimulating bullets because I like to think that this great comic passage, written in the winter or spring of 1954, was inspired by the elixir of Nabokov's own laughter in the dark, to borrow his resonant title.

"To borrow and to borrow and



to borrow . . . as the Bard said, with that cold in his head", hack writer Quilty tells Humbert, who has tracked him down to his baroque Pavor (Latin: "fear") Manor, where he kills Quilty for his abuses of language as well as for his misuse of Lolita. Nabokov in conversation toyed with language continuously, and though he worked slowly and carefully on his prose, his written puns must have come to him quickly and easily. Two examples: when my wife and I visited Montreux in 1970 Nabokov was most interested to know if my classes at Northwestern University had been disrupted by demonstrations. "No, nothing very dramatic, I replied, aside from one male student who expressed his disapproval of the war in Vietnam by calling me a eunuch. "Oh, no, Alfred, you misunderstood him", Nabokov said quickly. "He called you 'a unique'." "My classroom problems are not political", I continued. I told him about a nun who sat in the back row of one of my lecture courses and who one day complained after class that a couple near her were always spooning. "Sister", I had said, "in these troubled times we should be grateful if that's all they were doing", and I related this to Nabokov rather smugly, proud of what I deemed to be my quick wit. "*Ohhh*", moaned Nabokov, mourning my lost opportunity, clapping his hand to his head in mock anguish. "You should have said, 'Sister, be grateful that they were not forking'."

The brilliance of at least the latter pun reinforces one's sense of that aura of invincibility and absolute authority which Nabokov projected so successfully in his many prefaces, interviews, and letters to the editor (see his *Strong Opinions*). Yet the protective colouration of that persona (persona?), characterized by some as "cold", "arrogant", or "imperial", is in a way unfortunate inasmuch as it allowed no hint of the gentleness and sweetness which Nabokov, ensconced in Montreux, extended to casual visitors, friends, and, of course, to his family. Sympathetic readers of Nabokov should not find this surprising, given the authenticity of the filial love and tenderness expressed in so many of his works: *The Gift* (1938), *Speak, Memory* (1951, revised 1966), and *Pale Fire* (1962), where John Shade observes that his homely and gentle daughter, Hazel, subsequently a suicide, had been cast in the school play not as a fairy or elf but "as Mother Time,/A bent charwoman with slop pail and broom,/And like a fool I sobbed in the men's room".

Or the awkward overtures made by Dmin (1957) to his surrogate son, Victor (the gift of a football to an unathletic boy); the anguish of widower Adam Krug in *Bend Sinister* (1947) when he learns that his young son has been murdered by the State; the anxieties of the Russian widow who has not been told yet that her son has died in "Breaking the News" (1935), the émigré precursor of "Signs and Symbols" (1948), whose desperately hopeful parents refuse to read the deathly coded messages alluded to in the story's title; or the grief of the father for his dead son in "Christmas" (1924), a very early tale swayed in that concluding volume, *Details of a Sunset*.

How fitting that Nabokov, whose love for his father shines from so many pages, should have as *his* principal translator his own son, Dmitri (nine books in English, *Transparent Things* into Italian). And "translation" may well be the central metaphor for what happens in every act of human speech, in every (imperfect?) attempt to communicate and interpret the word and the world. The fantastic verbal games of *Pale Fire* certainly suggest as much, as did Nabokov's almost fanatical devotion to his theory and practice of absolutely literal and utilitarian verse translation, "beauty" sacrificed to accuracy, his only formal religious belief.

By the time the novel's title passage from *Timon of Athens* (Act IV, scene 3) has been translated from English to Zombian and

obtained my first Nabokov book, the out-of-print Real Life of Sebastian Knight, *at The Gotham Book Mart in New York City in 1953 for $3.50—the same price as any common new novel. Sans dust jacket, a vulnerable and friendless review copy whose flyleaf bore the large and rude imprint "PUBLICATION DATE/Dec 12 1941". the dusty and faded book looked as though it had been on its obscure shelf since that date, possibly a victim of Pearl Harbor, certainly a symbolic object, proffering another hidden but not so secret message:* Who is Nabokov? *Almost twenty years later, when Nabokov was established securely and visibly as Nabokov, I asked him to inscribe my sentimental edition of* Sebastian Knight. *He did so (left), in six or seven colours, balancing and arranging his drawn butterfly, signature, and dateline in such a way that the unsightly publication notice now took on the elegance and logic of design of one of those Saul Steinberg caprices in line which at once incorporate, contemplate, transform, and combat the gummed labels or rubber-stamped seals and imprinted injunctions of our commercial and bureaucratic civilization.* A.A.

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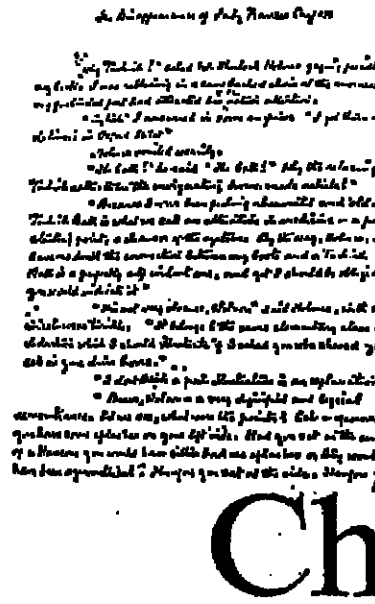
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reversed into English again, the sun and the moon have exchanged genders, Shakespeare's phrase "pale fire" has disappeared altogether, and we are indeed in the dark ("I live like Timon in his cave", says Kinbote), asked to confront and contemplate the mysteries of identity and communication and perception. The brilliant fun—pointless or off-putting to lazy, complacent readers—here adumbrates fundamental concerns.

Because of the intensity of his love for his wife and his father, whose liberal ideals he shared, the author of *Pale Fire* could himself translate experience poorly. As lawyer, editor and journalist, V. D. Nabokov was a notably active foe of antisemitism. It was nevertheless unusual for someone in his "set" to marry a Jewish woman, as his son did in Germany in 1925. Young Nabokov was thus at least doubly sensitive to the perniciousness of antisemitism. He would tolerate neither insults nor the blandest of innuendoes. Once, in Europe, he punched a man for such a "lapse". Considerably more subtle protests are scattered throughout his American works. The class list of forty names at Lo's school, an American archetype memorized by Humbert and interpolated in his text, includes "Flashman, Irving". Humbert offers brief comments on several of the children, concluding with "Irving, for whom I am sorry". Why is he sorry for him? "Poor Irving", answered Nabokov, "he is the only Jew among all those Gentiles".

Doubtless Nabokov's detestation of Ezra Pound—"that total fake"—was based on the poet's fascistic and antisemitic opinions as well as on the artistic clutter and confusion of his *Cantos*. The subject of poor Ezra (as he was deemed by many intellectuals) came up for discussion *c* 1954 at an Ithaca cocktail party given by the Nabokovs in the house they were renting that semester. Professor Arthur Mizener was at the centre of a group, telling them about another party, this one given by Delmore Schwartz during the summer of 1950, in Gambier, Ohio, while the annual Kenyon School of Letters was convening. Schwartz's guests were discussing the continuing controversy surrounding the awarding of the Bollingen [illegible] Schwartz, who had consumed a fair share of his own liquor, began to argue with Robert Lowell, who had been one of the Bollingen judges. Angrily, Schwartz accused Lowell of being an antisemite, too, and Mizener, retailing all this for the Nabokovs' guests, said that he had to sympathize with Lowell because Cal was an honourable man, and so forth. Host Nabokov, who had been listening at some remove, suddenly paled and tugged at the sleeve of another guest, Professor M. H. Abrams, pulling him around the corner and out of the room.

"What am I going to do, Mike?" asked a stricken Nabokov. "Arthur is a friend of mine but I am going to have to throw him out of my house." "Why?" asked Abrams, quite amazed. "For telling that antisemitic story!" replied Nabo*kov*. The statesmanship of M. H. Abrams prevailed, thereby preventing the realization of anything that might have resembled an aforementioned scene which Nabokov would soon compose, that "silent, soft, formless tussle on the part of two literati"—Humbert and Quilty, who, guessing his foreign-accented antagonist to be "a German *refugee*", had reminded him, "This is a Gentile's house, you know." *That's* no joke, folks (as Hum would *say*). The incident at Nabokov's house isn't funny, either, of course; it is very touching.

The penultimate entry of *Pale Fire*'s Index, preceding "*Zembla*", is "*Yeslove*, a fine town, district and bishopric [a diocese; office of bishop—A.A.], north of Onhava, *149, 275*", and line 275 of the poem, we remember, reads: "We have been married forty years" (John and Sybil Shade): Yes, love indeed, and it looks and sounds like a succinct allusion to Molly Bloom, I told Nabokov. "Yes, it is", he answered. "My novel is a rather clever, complex thing, but its message is simple."

His words closely approximate what Joyce told Frank Budgen about *Ulysses*, and, nestled in the Index, Nabokov's "message" is hidden in the requisite Joycean way.

Another well-kept secret at Cornell was the fact that Professor Nabokov was also a writer. I possessed this esoteric information, had read *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* in 1953, as a sophomore, but this is neither the time nor the place to brag or strut. "His style is even more florid than mine", he announced one day, lecturing on Robert Louis Stephenson (as that difficult name is transliterated in my 1954 class notes) and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. What does that mean? most of the class wondered. Was Stevenson a colourful lecturer, too? Not yet the best-selling author of *Lolita*, the celebrity prof whose enrolments would double, Nabokov was then beloved as a *teacher*, and he "translated" and returned our warm esteem and gratitude in the only way a teacher should: by continuing to teach as well as he could.

On a visit to Ithaca recorded in *Upstate* (1971), Edmund Wilson was horrified to see how hard Nabokov worked at his university job. When the hero of *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974) ponders the number of hours spent preparing 2,000 pages of lectures, he is speaking for Nabokov. His *Eugene Onegin* translation and commentary (1964, *revised* 1975), the longest, most time-consuming project of his career (more than ten years) began at Véra's suggestion in about 1950 as a service to his students, a modest mimeographed handout, a few stapled pages. It is most painful to think of this important collector's item now buried in a box of college junk mouldering in the basement of a suburban garage of some aging Cornell couple unwanted, quite unloved

Nabokov sometimes communicated his uncomplicated affection for his friends in terms quite literally of his own making. When introducing my wife and me to aquaintances in the hotel or friends from Montreux or nearby Vevey, Nabokov liked to tell them we had met in his lecture course. Actually, we did not, and she had in fact taken the course a year later than I. Given his dedication to the truth, whether perceived under or beyond the microscope, I finally corrected him one evening when he was happily talking about a letter he had received from "another" couple who had met in that class. "Of course you met in *my* class!" No. "Véra, you remember, don't you?" She smiled, but offered no support. "But I remember it so well", he persisted. "You were seated on opposite sides of the wide lecture hall. As the semester progressed you moved closer and closer. Finally, in the last week, the third on *Ulysses*, you were side by side." No, I was sorry, this was not so. Different years. "Really? I was so sure. Well, it is nevertheless a very beautiful story." But he was certain that many couples had indeed met that way. I concurred—legions of doves, marching out of his last class two by two. He imagined one of "his" couples on their first date discussing *Anna Karenina*, getting engaged, married, then naming their first child "Anna". "I hope it was a daughter", I said. "Oh, yes, yes", chortled Nabokov, his eyes starting to water from his mirth. "But if not, at least that troubled lad's Freudian shaman won't have to work too hard to discover the source of his 'identity crisis'. A few years, perhaps."

Nabokov loved badinage, to him the conversational equivalent of tennis or one of those intentionally swift and hence comical "blitzkrieg" games of chess. Such sport was always in season. Witness our vacation with the Nabokovs in Zermatt in July, 1974. I was walking down a side street with Nabokov, tap-tapping my furled umbrella on the cobblestones, when some unintentionally antic movement on my part caught his eye. "Hmm", mused Nabokov, "a little gesture you just made with your umbrella and the way you are walking [gingerly, on wet stones] reminded me of Bob Hope in his first film, *Big Broadcast of* . . . some year or other—we saw it in Paris before the war." "*—of 1938!*", I declaimed, with a certain pride of pedantry. "How did you know that was his first movie?" "Ask me something I don't know", responded Nabokov, surprised that I should be surprised by his scholarship. The implications of his challenge were clear. "How many home runs did Babe Ruth hit in his career?" I asked (Hank Aaron had recently surpassed Ruth's record). Nabokov was astonished. "Five hundred?", he inquired lamely, after several seconds. "No", I answered. "714, not including All-Star games and World Series." "Well, émigrés never know anything about baseball", he said, with no conviction at all.

The tide would soon turn in his favour, the fates smile . . . and had

this been said to him in conversation during our walk he would have glanced over at the deadpan comedian beside him, to pick up the smile or nuance of expression signalling *temporary mental derangement* or "Yes, the cliché cluster was intentional." Nabokov of course detested and mocked clichés—most insidious as *poshlost'* i e, pretentious and deceptively "serious" trash—but he did so not as a *déclassé* aristocrat or a "correct usage" snob. Because clichés trivialize, betray, or deny the uniqueness of the thought, memory, or perception struggling to find expression, they are finally an affront to consciousness itself. "How small the cosmos (a kangaroo's pouch would hold it), how paltry and puny in comparison to human consciousness, to a single individual recollection, and its expression in words!", Nabokov states in the first chapter of *Speak, Memory*, but not in the 1951 edition (then titled *Conclusive Evidence* [of his having existed]). He added that signal sentence when he was sixty-five, his eyes and mind ever open, alive and Hopeful, to pun now in Quilty's manor and return us to the cobblestones of Zermatt.

Our visit to this Alpine town was to be a "working vacation", as always, for Nabokov, who through his seventy-seventh year could be expected to walk and run ten to fifteen miles on a spring or summer day in search of butterflies. But it had rained the first two days of our stay in Zermatt. "Oh, when will it clear, *when* will it clear?" groaned Nabokov, pacing the hotel lobby as though the world had been created the previous night and he had to examine at once its resplendent marvels, describe and name them. On the third day there was light, and early that morning—far too early that morning—we accompanied the seventy-five-year-old writer-naturalist on a butterfly hunting trip ("lepping" he always called it) into the mountains.

His sedentary guests walked along quite stoically, their thin-skinned office shoes no help at all, as amply soled Nabokov, squinting and scanning the horizon, talked on steadily, mainly about the flora and fauna around us. "Tolstoy saw that [dense shrubbery] best"—these eyes, School of Nabokov, saw a black-green base splashed by brilliant orange flowers, a Fauvist bush—"and you remember how Chekhov described those berries in—*ah! There's one*, what I've been looking for [name in Latin]", and Nabokov was off, up and over some boulders, not aloft, an assault squad of one in pursuit of a small yellow butterfly. After depositing his capture ("Wonderful specimen, wonderful!") in the worn old Johnson & Johnson Band-aid tin which had served him since the forties, the climb continued ("That hostel has the sweetest of Alpine butters, I speak as an expert, we can stop on the way down"), his good spirits rising with the altitude, save for one quiet moment during our ascent when Nabokov paused on the path and gestured towards the hillside. "This is the timberline of my youth. See those trees . . ." but his sentence trailed off (had he said "aspens"?) and his pale blue eyes stared at and through the terra firma of Switzerland, fixed on a more distant and numinous space.

> The higher the dark and damp
> trails twist upward, the clearer
> grow the tokens, treasured since childhood,
> of my northern plain.
> Shall we not climb thus
> the slopes of paradise, at the hour of death,
> meeting all the loved things
> that in life elevated us?

wondered Nabokov in "I Like That Mountain", a poem of 1925, composed in Feldberg (the Black Forest), when he was twenty-six. Now, here, almost fifty years later, the imperfect present tense, and Nabokov's ebullience was momentarily eclipsed or consumed by an inscrutable solitariness.

"Look, *I* caught a butterfly", I proudly exclaimed a few minutes later, holding aloft the cupped hands that contained an insect I had picked off a very low shrub. "Actually, that's a moth", said Nabokov, his tone kind, almost apologetic. But I feigned humiliation, slumped abjectly, and the game was on. "Moreover", Nabokov added, with a mock frown, "it is a common species." I slumped even lower. [Timidly:] "But I caught it with my bare hands." "Which is easy to do!" thundered Nabokov, his tone very dark now. "They are drawn to the warmth of human hands"—he drew a breath, I slumped some more—"and furthermore [theatrical pause before the final lethal thrust] this wingèd fellow was gaga from sleep." I fell against a boulder and grabbed it for support as the bored and patient creature cursed its freedom. The shimmering snow-walled Matterhorn behind me had provided an adequate backdrop for this genre scene, an old-fashioned *rencontre* in St Petersburg or Rio. "*Utterly defeated!*" proclaimed Nabokov, and we laughed.

Utterly defeated. That will never be said of Vladimir Nabokov, although McFate—as he jocularly named it in *Lolita*—too often tested and tormented him. His story—history?—is too well known to be rehearsed here.

> Beyond the seas where I have lost a sceptre,
> I hear the neighing of my dappled nouns,
> soft participles coming down the steps,
> treading on leaves, trailing their rustling gowns

Nabokov wrote in his finest American verse, "An Evening of Russian Poetry" (1945), the year he became an American citizen. "I haf nofing . . . I haf nofing left, nofing, nofing!" weeps addlepated Timofey Pnin, the oldest Assistant Professor in the annals of American higher education. Yet Nabokov did not express himself that way. "Few men who have lost so much have complained so little", writes John Updike in his beautiful (unsigned) tribute to Nabokov in *The New Yorker* (July 18, 1977). Again, an example: "There was a period in the late nineteen-twenties when I used the courts of an elegant private club", Nabokov told me, around 1970, recalling the tennis lessons he gave as a very lean émigré in Berlin ("Yes, 6ft, 140 or so pounds", eavesdropper Nabokov might say at this juncture, to deflate the potential pathos of my last phrase).

> My pupils and I would wait for the "pro" and his German debutantes to depart for a long lunch—or whatever—and then we would use the court. More exactly, we'd arrive early to head off any rival poachers, and lurk behind trees, like spies or sporty detectives in an old film or *roman policier*, and once, when the pro—a blond brute—returned early, we had to run!

He laughed as he spoke, restaging these scenes with no irony whatsoever, no hint of any kinship with the familiar formulas of a riches-to-rags-to-riches saga. These and other similar recollections were doubtless omitted from *Speak, Memory* lest they appear to limn self-pity or confuse significant experience with the demands and vagaries of business and low finance. I've said nothing about genius, a miraculous or perhaps preternatural force. Dignity, honour, character, courage, tenacity, and a transcendent sense of humour, these are some of the representative and recognizable *human* qualities responsible for Nabokov's massive and darkling oeuvre, his gift to us.

The amplitude of Nabokov's resilient spirit is summarized for me by one further recollection of Cornell, when I was one of thirty or so students enrolled in his Russian literature course. The class was held at the end of a long, windowless, dimly lit corridor in the basement of Goldwin Smith Hall, one side of which was devoted to the art department's motley and dusty collection of plaster-of-Paris Greek sculpture, artifacts, and architectural fragments. I was rushing to class one dismal wintry morning, three or four minutes late, but slackened my stride when I noticed that Professor Nabokov was also late, and walking ahead of me halfway down the hall. He hurried into a classroom, and my heart quopped (one of VN's favourite coinages in *Ulysses*, very impressive when worked into an exam answer or fraternity conversation) as I realized it was one door too soon. I entered the class to find Professor Nabokov several sentences into his lecture; not wanting to waste another minute, he was stooped over his notes, intently reading them to thirty stunned students, a shell-shocked platoon belonging to an even tardier don.

Trying to be as transparent as possible, I approached the lectern and touched Nabokov on the sleeve. He turned, and peered down at me over his eyeglasses, amazed. "Mr Nabokov", I said very quietly, "you are in the wrong classroom." He readjusted his glasses on his nose, focused his gaze on the motionless frieze-like figures seated before him, and calmly announced, "You have just seen the 'Coming Attraction' for Literature 325. If you are interested, you may register next fall." Professor Pnin no more, he closed his folder of notes and moved one door down the dark hall. "A most extraordinary thing just happened, most extraordinary", he told the students of Literature 325, chuckling to himself as he opened his folder once more and, not bothering to explain what had happened, began to lecture.

That spirit and the support and iron-willed confidence of Véra, his wife for more than half a century, sustained Vladimir Nabokov, allowing talent and genius to prevail. He was fifty-four at the time of this incident, the shortest-lived and least traumatic displacement of his long exile. *Lolita, Pnin, Pale Fire*, the four-volume Pushkin edition, *Ada*, and much much more were not yet born, not to mention the baker's dozen of his untranslated Russian works—in English, a lucky thirteen.

Yet Nabokov's memories of his luckless generation of Russian writers were circumscribed by gloom. He might speak of Vladislav Khodasevich, say, with keen admiration, but sadly, as if he knew, miraculously, that hardly anyone now reading this page would recognize the name of that extraordinary poet and critic (1886-1939). After dinner one evening during our November 1972 visit to Montreux, I showed Nabokov an early version of the table of contents for *The Bitter Air of Exile: Russian Writers in the West, 1922-72*, which I was co-editing with Simon Karlinsky (the title is drawn from a poem by Anna Akhmatova). He studied the pages, silently, visibly moved by the idea of an anthology in English devoted to these writers, part of that "mythical tribe whose bird-signs and moon-signs [Nabokov] retrieve[s] from the desert dust" in *The Gift*, to quote his foreword to that great novel. "So nice, so very nice", he said softly, placing the pages on the table between us. At four a m, when I arose for a glass of water (I'm a decorous reporter), I could hear someone pacing the floor above us in the Nabokovs' apartment. The next morning he handed me an index card. "The product of my insomnia", he said. "You may use it as an epigraph for your Tsvetaeva section, or however you wish." The card contained his translation of several unidentified lines by Marina Tsvetaeva, whom he had known in Paris during the 1930s. "A poet of genius", he says of her in *Speak, Memory*. Tsvetaeva endured extreme poverty, isolation, illness, political disgrace (because of her husband, a double agent) and finally committed suicide in 1941—a terrible story, not untypical of émigré life. The verse Nabokov chose for us reads:

> Amidst the dust of bookshops, wide dispersed
> And never purchased there by anyone,
> Yet similar to precious wines, my verse
> Can wait: its turn shall come.

Landless, utterly free, wielding a new "sceptre", Nabokov in the last fifteen years of his life triumphed on the international scale of Stravinsky and Balanchine, fellow émigrés who did not have to perform in another language. Speaking at the memorial service for his father in New York City on July 21, 1977, Dmitri Nabokov said,

> Son and father don't discuss profound matters very often, but on one of the last occasions when we walked together in the mountains my father told me that his life's dream was fulfilled, he had accomplished what he wanted. As Schopenhauer might have imagined it, my father's books, he told me, were like an undeveloped film that gradually came to life.

Thus the final visual trope of a writer who shared a few vistas with Ansel Adams, and who did alas leave one secret negative, in Dmitri's words "the last photograph of that film": *The Original of Laura*, a novel in progress, "secret" because Nabokov abhorred the posthumous publication of an author's unfinished work.

Nabokov's contentment was surely predicated on a confident sense that the subtle and glowing pigments of thousands upon thousands of inimitable sentences and paragraphs will indeed prove durable. The "aurochs" alluded to in the closing sentences of *Lolita* (my epigraph) refer to those delicate and stylized images of bison, those Rose-Period Picassos still visible on the cave walls of France and Spain where they were painted ten to

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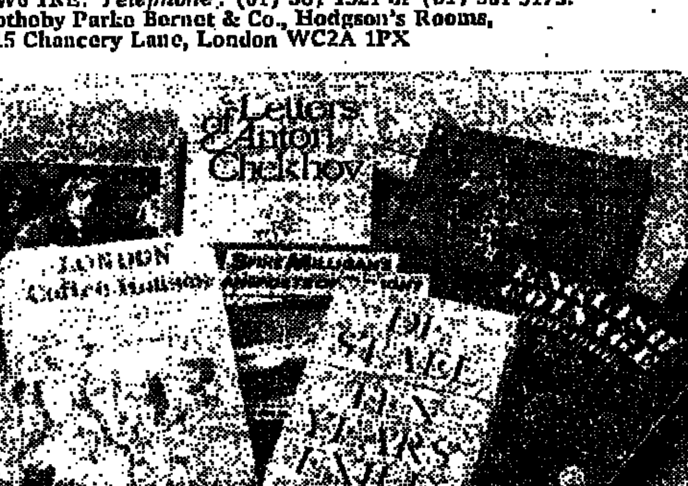
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twenty thousand years ago. So-called posterity, obviously enough, will decide whether or not Nabokov possessed "the secret" of which Humbert speaks; time will tell, as a platitudinous reviewer or professor might say.

But, for now, do the following six miniature enchantments need any signatures in order to be identified as "Nabokovs"? From *The Gift*: "Pattern of Elysium lines! Once in Ordos [China] my father, climbing a hill after a storm, inadvertently entered the base of a rainbow—the rarest occurrence!—and found himself in coloured air, in a play of light as if in paradise. He took one more step—and left paradise." Fyodor, *The Gift*'s apprentice poet, also says, "I am convinced that extraordinary surprises await us [in death]. It's a pity one can't imagine what one can't compare to anything. Genius is an African who dreams up snow." In *Pnin*, an equivalent genius flourishes on another continent when a young artist dreams of placing various objects in turn behind a glass of water: "The comb, stood on end, resulted in the glass's seeming to fill with beautifully striped liquid, a zebra cocktail." Conversely, a summoning in *Speak, Memory* of the worn-down coloured pencils of Nabokov's idyllic childhood concludes with an invisible image, a quantum leap towards infinite reaches: "The white one alone, that lanky albino among pencils, kept its original length, or at least did so until I discovered that, far from being a fraud leaving no mark on the page, it was the ideal implement since I could imagine whatever I wished while I scrawled" (see the dazzling Digression on a Pencil which constitutes Chapter 3, *Transparent Things*). Or, lest we overlook Nabokov's aural surprises, here is another literally narrow and slender example, or wooden passage, of a kind more necessary than ever to a culture drawn to the sensibilities of Clint Eastwood, Sam Peckinpah, punk rock, et al: "With the help of the janitor [Pnin] screwed onto the side of the desk a pencil sharpener—that highly satisfying, highly philosophical implement that goes ticonderoga-ticonderoga, feeding on the yellow finish and sweet wood, and ends up in a kind of soundlessly spinning ethereal void as we all must."

As Professor Nabokov said in class, more than once, only a sibilant separates "comic" and "cosmic". The wake, it appears, is over; who is smiling now as we contemplate that glide, no longer rhetorical, *towards the—void?* "Death is divestment, death is communion" states the authorial voice in the opening chapter of *Pnin*. "It may be wonderful to mix with the landscape, but to do so is the end of the tender ego."

"A few days before his death", said Dmitri Nabokov, concluding the memorial service,

> when [my father] was still strong enough to speak, as I was leaving his hospital room after having helped him eat and kissed his still warm forehead, I saw tears on his cheeks. When I asked him why, he named a species of butterfly that was already on the wing, and his eyes told me that he knew he would never go in quest of it again.

Fifty years earlier, in Berlin, Vladimir Nabokov, aged twenty-eight, revised and expanded the sunny concluding vision of "I Like That Mountain" (1925) by writing this poem, titled "In Paradise" (*V raju*, translated by the author in *Poems and Problems*, 1970):

My soul, beyond distant death
you image I see like this:
a provincial naturalist,
an eccentric lost in paradise.
There, in a glade, a wild angel slumbers,
a semi-pavonian creature.
Poke at it curiously
with your green umbrella,
speculating how, first of all,
you will write a paper on it,
then—But there are no learned journals,
nor any readers in paradise!
And there you stand, not yet believing
your wordless woe.
About that blue somnolent animal
whom will you tell, whom?
Where is the world and the labelled roses,
the museum and the stuffed birds?
And you look and look through your tears
at those unnamable wings.

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The circumstantial evidence

By Igor Vinogradoff

ANDREW FIELD :
Nabokov
His Life in Part
302pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.50.

Andrew Field is best known as the compiler of an immense bibliography (over 1,500 items) of Nabokov's work in three languages and their very many translations. He is, a Nabokov buff, I use his own phraseology, some of which requires a glossary. He is the first holder of the Chair of Humanities at what must be the newest of new Australian universities—Griffith, Brisbane, Queensland, which opened for teaching as a state university with 870 students in 1975.

Nabokov himself does not always seem to have thought Professor Field's book worth writing. "Does it add anything worthwhile to my own autobiography, *Speak, Memory*?", he appears to have wondered. Professor Field thinks it does; I share Nabokov's doubts.

The author's principal object has been to gather as many unrecorded *outer* facts as possible about Nabokov himself and the formative influences in his life. His difficulties have been threefold. Nabokov has already recorded—often incompactably well—the circumstances he himself considered most significant for the development of his personality: an immensely wealthy family background, childhood and adolescence in superb St Petersburg and an enchanting country place, governesses and tutors, mother and father (both idealized), first love, emigration, heartrending homesickness for Russia. Second, Nabokov wore an impenetrable armour of reserve. Professor Field got past the wife and the secretary and the servants who protected the great man from ordinary intruders; foils clashed, but he did not get under his subject's guard. Finally, Professor Field lacks the basic knowledge of the background from which Nabokov sprang to be able to reconstruct it with success.

What is the result? We learn (and this important fact is several times repeated) that Nabokov took a bath every morning. We learn about his working routine—a relentless, indefatigable writer scribbling at a lectern from 8.30 till luncht ime, about his daily round on the lake front or in his gigantic hotel suite at Montreux, his devoted wife, his filing secretary and his private cook, his compulsive tipping habits which earned him the devotion of the hotel staff, the special *crêpes flambées* which were christened after him, like a regiment of Novgorod (once named after a forbear), a river in Novaya Zemlya (named after another), fifteen novels in Russian and English, several translations, a mass of short stories and fugitive pieces, a number of chess problems and some exquisite butterflies and moths. Professor Field has collected a series of biographical notes under all these heads; they do not make a biography. The trouble is that the main note, which should have dealt with Nabokov's *vie intime*, or inner life, has already been written by Nabokov himself and Professor Field has added little or nothing to this central theme.

We know that Nabokov and his wife were a devoted couple for more than fifty years; apart from that, we only learn that they habitually and lovingly disagreed on every conceivable subject from the choice of wine at luncheon (one bottle often sent back, sometimes two) to the year in which she introduced him to *Some People* and *South Wind*. We know that Nabokov's Rukavishnikov uncle and younger brother Sergei were homosexuals; Nabokov has written some evocative pages about them in *Speak, Memory* and *Vot i vsyo* ("That is That"). Nabokov was and remained a private man and he did not feel moved to open his heart (or his conversational resources) to Professor Field. He told him about his favourite ball-point pens (with special ink erasers—very unusual), about the index cards called *fiches Bristol* on which he wrote, about his special laundryman (whose naughty little son would draw pictures on his shirt cases and so sometimes dirty his shirts), about the English and American papers he bought every day at the two rival news-stands in Montreux; he was their best customer. He was not disposed to tell him much else.

Professor Field has filled in the gaps with some useful information about Nabokov's "democratic" (officially called private or commercial) Tenishev school in St Petersburg, where there was no rigid classical curriculum as in the old-style gymnasia and where the number of boys of Jewish faith was not restricted to 10 per cent as elsewhere; more than 200 such schools with over 100,000 pupils were founded in Imperial Russia after 1895. He has added some interesting details about Cambridge and Nabokov's life as a needy émigré, eking out a hand-to-mouth European living with tennis, boxing and language lessons, writing Russian novels which earned great praise but little money, and giving successful literary readings, which brought slightly more reward; long frustrated in his university career in the United States by his refusal to recognize the merits of Stalin and his gang.

Unfortunately this material has been too meagre to satisfy Professor Field. He has found it necessary to enliven and augment it with a quantity of shaky genealogy and dubious anecdotage about Nabokov's forbears, notably his grandfather and father. Few of these unreliable gossip paragraphs matter much in themselves, but their cumulative effect is nauseous, all the more so because most of them derive from *Nabokov himself* or from his close relatives. To claim descent from an anonymous Tartar prince in the fourteenth-century when your earliest traceable forbear was a minor eighteenth-century figure is silly; to talk of the blood of Peter the Great in your veins is silly; to boast that King George V invited your father to stay at Windsor when he was in England as a visiting journalist in 1916 is very silly.

All this and a great deal more fell at different times from the lips of Nabokov and his near relations and is taken very seriously by Professor Field, not to mention his belief in the high-minded righteousness of the old Minister of Justice (Nabokov's grandfather, "a bureaucrat to the marrow of his bones" according to Milyutin—a close friend, however much Professor Field may try to misquote Milyutin in the opposite sense—of Pobedonostsev, the "arch-reactionary" *éminence grise* of the early years of Alexander III); not to mention his faith in the doubtful "liberalism" of Nabokov *père*, that fractious millionaire with a touch of the pavvenu, who wrote hundreds of bitter newspaper columns from a narrow radical party point of view and was not satisfied till he had helped the Russian monarchy to destroy itself.

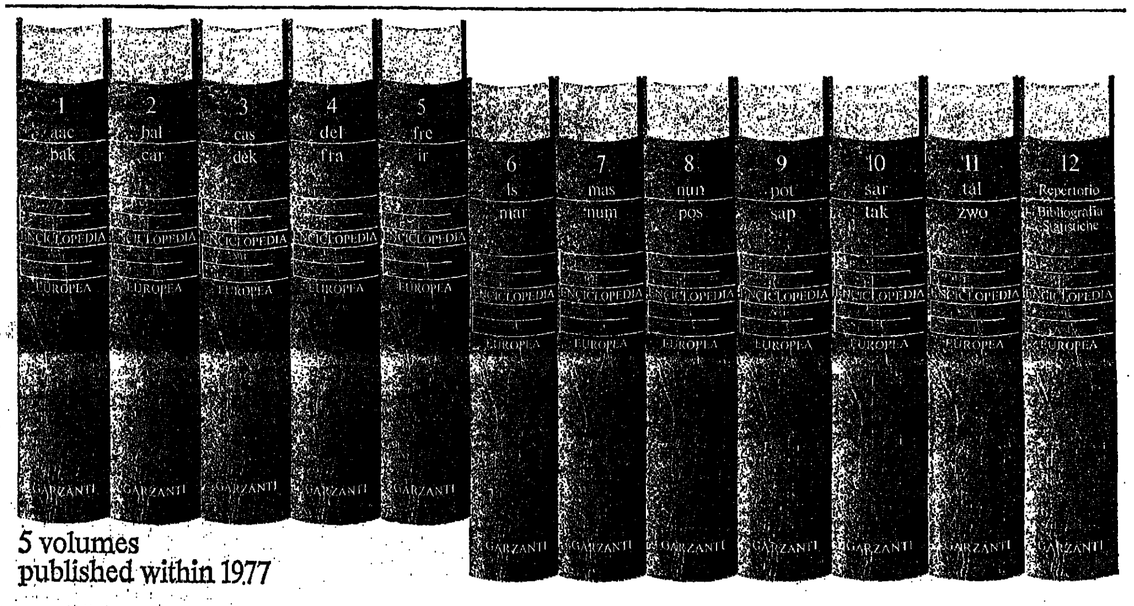
Professor Field has done the memory of Nabokov little service by regurgitating and inflating this flotsam of family legend, which merely misrepresents his remarkable hero as an egocentric megalomaniac, retailing trivial or invented family associations with Marie Antoinette or Pushkin, while scorning meticulous like Dostoevsky or Stendhal or Balzac. It is in character that he has furnished his book with no index, no bibliography and no footnotes.

Nabokov had contradictory recollections of Cambridge, a university Professor Field looks down on from the heights of Griffith. It is perhaps appropriate that this hyper-sophisticated cosmopolitan of many talents and achievements should have finally made his fortune by *Lolita* which his greatest American friend and critic, Edmund Wilson, called a "modern Fanny Hill" destined to "enjoy runaway sales because of its sexual theme".

Professor Field has some stimulating pages on the curious love-hate relationship between Nabokov and Edmund Wilson, one of the first Americans to spot Nabokov's outstanding gifts as a writer of English *and* promote his early publications in the *New Yorker* and elsewhere, while at the same time disagreeing with him violently on almost every important political and literary subject, from Lenin (where Nabokov was generally in the right) to Nabokov's strangely prosaic translation of Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin* (where Nabokov was generally in the wrong).

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Lycées for young ladies

By Theodore Zeldin

FRANÇOISE MAYEUR :
L'Enseignement secondaire des jeunes filles sous la Troisième République
488pp. Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques. 170fr.

What makes French women different from other women? This is a question that begs many more. It is certain that their relations with men, their intellectual and legal emancipation, their view of themselves, have evolved in original ways, which are not exactly duplicated in other countries. But to explain that, one needs to investigate much more than the history of women, and it will clearly be a long time before the comparative study of women will be possible, for a vast amount of work still remains to be done. Ten years ago, people could try to write single-volume histories of women. Today, it is impossible to do that even for one country in even one century. Detailed, specialized research on different aspects of their lives is now essential.

Françoise Mayeur's authoritative study of girls' secondary education in France is therefore very welcome. It may surprise readers that this is the first book to treat this subject in a comprehensive way. Just how hard it is to do is shown by the large volume of archives and documents Mme Mayeur has consulted; but also by the fact that her bibliography is, nevertheless, notably shorter than that of another recent thesis, on boys' secondary education. Women teachers wrote fewer books than male ones; their pupils wrote fewer memoirs. It is a great achievement, therefore, to be able to present so clear and instructive an account of an elusive and neglected subject. It is even more of an achievement to produce a portrait of a pioneering movement without being worshipful, parochial or romantic illusions. This book, as a result, can serve not only as a model for studies of education, but also as a stimulus to reflection on the whole question of what education can and cannot achieve.

The honest conclusion that emerges from it is that state secondary education for girls was not particularly influential in liberating women in France. Women themselves played very little part in demanding it; and indeed men were not very interested by the question either. What Victor Duruy opened special classes for girls in the late 1860s, only a couple of thousand girls in the whole country attended them. When Camille Sée introduced the Bill which established state secondary schools for girls (1882), he was successful largely because of general indifference: no political party had taken the cause up in its programme and even the League of Education, so active and important in the development of primary education, gave no support. Girls did not rush into these schools: by 1905 there were only about 30,000 pupils in them, which meant that there were roughly eight times as many boys as girls in state secondary schools, and in 1920 there were still twice as many boys as girls in them.

The people who got involved were peculiar, representing only a few narrow segments of society. Twenty per cent of girls at lycées were the daughters of teachers, and nine per cent of other civil servants, so that, for one third of their recruitment, state schools relied on state employees. Another third of their pupils were the daughters of people who ran their own businesses. The rich and the upper classes generally abstained, as did the workers and peasants too. The lycées attracted an unusual number of Protestant pupils, and an unusually large proportion of the officials who ran them and the teachers who taught in them were Protestants. They therefore began as a somewhat marginal eccentricity.

This was paradoxical, because their aims were in fact highly conservative. They did not attempt to turn girls into blue-stockings. Their syllabus deliberately excluded philosophy, Latin and Greek, and emphasized modern languages and French literature, as well as sewing and music, with a view to turning out women who would be good mothers and wives above all else. They did not prepare their pupils for the professions; they had their own school-leaving certificate which did not give entry to the universities. They stressed moral education rather than the acquisition of information, the fulfilment of duty rather than the development of individuality; they discouraged competitiveness and vanity.

The teachers in them were not revolutionaries, or even feminists. Though these schools were supposed to liberate girls from the clutches of the churches, they in fact adopted many of the characteristics of the convents. Over half of the teachers remained unmarried; they led lives of austere self-abnegation, hardly any of them took any interest in politics, and they did not seek equality with men. They were proud of the distinctive, mothering, unintellectual atmosphere of their schools, and did not push their girls to compete with the boys. The only career they held out before them was teaching itself. It is true there were occasionally unconventional teachers, who had the effrontery not to wear their hair in a bun, or who escaped from provincial constraints by making surreptitious visits to Paris; but on the whole they rejected protest, because they were deeply imbued with the moral conviction that self-control, rather than the transformation of society, was the key to happiness. They were not even anticlerical, as the myths about them have it.

The idea of girls and boys having the same education therefore came very slowly. The pressure that brought this about arose largely from outside the state education system itself, which had settled into a cosy complacency. It may well be that it was a partly justifiable complacency. Mme Mayeur rightly points out that giving girls the same education as boys meant in practice the adoption of examination-mania and the abandonment of the more disinterested approach that the girls' schools had developed. When girls won the right and the ability to take the *baccalauréat*, that was a great victory, but the main goal of schooling them came to be the passing of the *baccalauréat*, and that was a great loss.

Some of the early supporters of girls' education had hoped that it would end the "intellectual divorce" between the sexes, encourage compassionate marriages and strengthen the family by enabling wives to bring up their children in a more enlightened way. It is very uncertain whether the schools succeeded in achieving any of these goals. Already in the 1920s head teachers were protesting their powerlessness before pupils who were rejecting their values and mocking their sanctions; it was against the school rules that girls formed friendships with boys. Those who did so, like those who broke the rules by smoking, were of course a minority. But a sociological survey in the 1930s showed that compassionate marriages and friendships between the sexes were still far from general. The process by which behaviour changed, as opposed to the values advocated by schools, is still a subject that awaits study.

Mme Mayeur's book is an invaluable contribution to the understanding of change in French society, but it is also important, on a more general level, for every society that confronts teachers with pupils, who each have their own ideas. Educational policy is, for a good part, the product of ideology. It is not the function of historians to quarrel about ideology, but it is their business to show what actually happens when ideologies are put into practice. In this case-study, Mme Mayeur shows how the principles enunciated in the law of 1882 were whittled down not only by financial exigencies, but even more by administrative caution and convenience. The head teachers were given exceptionally wide powers in girls' schools, but they were too conservative and conformist to make full use of their opportunity. The people who implemented the law were thus more influential than those who passed it. Mme Mayeur also shows, however, that governmental action can suddenly have a decisive effect when it is least expected to. In 1924 the conservative Léon Bérard, as Minister of Education, was anxious to halt the decline of Latin and Greek in the schools. His reform of the syllabus for this purpose accidentally opened the way for girls to obtain the *baccalauréat*.

Public opinion in education was so divided that one can hardly blame governments for trying to force their own ideas on the people. The teachers masked their hesitations behind fervent pride in their own particular schools, and compensated for the inconvenience of their pedagogical aims by a self-sacrificing devotion to their pupils. The parents were incapable of demanding any particular policy, because they were torn between their ambition for social climbing and their desire to protect their children from dangerous new ideas. In 1917 a large-scale public inquiry into girls' education proved useless: it showed that people were absorbed by the question of what the ideal woman was or should be, but utterly unable to agree.

Mme Mayeur promises a second volume, which will review the period since the 1920s in greater detail than has been possible here. It will be eagerly awaited.

The sound of myth

By John Sturrock

MICHEL TOURNIER :
Le Vent paraclet
293pp. Paris: Gallimard. 39fr.

Michel Tournier writes slowly but successfully. At the age of fifty-three he has published only three novels, but they have made him—especially the second of them, *Le Roi des Aulnes*, which was a hugely imaginative and ambitious book—one of the few "straight" novelists in France who can claim intellectual parity with the experimental kind. If, that is, M Tournier can fairly be called a "straight" novelist; for he confesses in *Le Vent paraclet*, an interesting and combative piece of intellectual autobiography, that the orthodox form of his novels is meant partly as bait, in order to get people to read what they might otherwise refuse. Deception is needed because he is a metaphysical novelist, more likely to find charm and inspiration in Leibniz or Spinoza than in the work of other novelists. The sound to which M Tournier is most attentive, and which he would like to come from his own books, is that of "le bruissement mythologique". To produce it, he adapts the supposedly safe conventions of realism to fantastic, transcendent ends.

Le Vent paraclet is part life-story, part commentary on the higher, more difficult meanings of M Tournier's novels. It starts with a desolate account of his childhood, particularly of a day when he was four years old and had his tonsils aggressively and bloodily removed. That was one of several traumatic injuries to his body or his emotions in the first few years of his life, all of them remembered here in order to document his eventual crusade against "une société farouchement anti-physique, mutilante et castratrice". Nor does M Tournier seem to think that French society is any gentler or more intelligent towards children now than it was then. At every age it kills sensuality, which is something he prizes—and prizes to the unpopular extent of asking for a church that is "fastueuse, subtile, érotique".

But if M Tournier provokes he does not forgive; his ends *Le Vent paraclet*, very much like a militant thrope who feels closer to nature than to the human race: as a horticultural castaway or mystical *homme-jardin*, hoeing away at his 2,000 square metres of prime French countryside. He will not be too troubled there by the vanities and spites of literary Paris. He himself has larger quarrels to pick, with the modern world in general, and *Le Vent paraclet* puts a very lively case. It makes good reading as an index to the ideas, biases and formative memories of a solitary and unusual writer.

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The phenomenon of Maurice

By Douglas Johnson

JACQUELINE MER :
Le parti de Maurice Thorez ou le bonheur communiste français
241pp. Paris: Payot.

During the post-war years (essentially between March 1946 and June 1947, which can also be described as volumes 22 and 23 of Book Five of the *Oeuvres* of Maurice Thorez) the French Communist Party was in a unique position. While elsewhere politicians and intellectuals tended to be pessimistic, sterile or destructive, the Communists in France supposedly possessed a positive and determined view of future development. This is presented as the distinctive quality of the party in France, in line with the traditions of the French Revolution and appropriate to the role which the French have always assigned to themselves in Europe and among humanity in general.

Since Maurice Thorez, "celui que tout un peuple appelle tendrement, amicalement, Maurice", according to Aragon, was not only the undisputed leader and spokesman of this party, but also its symbol and very identity, Jacqueline Mer has chosen to explain and illuminate his position. She has done so not by looking to the ideas or tactics of a party which was in the thick of its political battles, but by seeking to analyse the ethnological and anthropological characteristics of "le parti de Maurice Thorez". She finds that Max Weber's thesis concerning the nature of the charismatic leader fails to explain the success of Thorez, and that the revelations made by Philippe Robrieux in his 1975 biography (described here as "un livre plein d'indices et de malveillance") that Thorez was not the real author of his autobiography *Fils du peuple* any more than he was really the son of a miner, are unimportant for any real appreciation of the Thorez phenomenon. She insists that Thorez was both the "chef charismatique" and the "catalyseur de l'unité et de la métamorphose communiste-française", that the French Communist Party is in no way like other political parties, and that the former secretary-general is in a very particular position, since "Thorez mort, le signe anthropomorphique se décale pour devenir éternel".

The phenomenon is to be studied anthropologically therefore. Jacqueline Mer takes as her starting-point the Diola peoples of the Casamance region of West Africa and the preeminence among them of the legendary figure of Adrisitoud. Her text is studded, not with the expected citations from Marx, Lenin and Stalin, nor even with references to Thorez's associates such as Cachin, Duclos and Cogniot, or his critics, like Marty, Lecoeur and Tillon, but rather with extensive quotations from Radcliffe-Brown, Jean Girard, Lévi-Strauss, Max Weber and Jacques Lacan. The emphasis is on a political leadership which involves and galvanizes a whole community. With Thorez, the clenched fist, we are told, became the hand outstretched in friendship; with Thorez, supposedly, the whole history of France is summoned to the side of the party; with Thorez, nationalism and patriotism were the roots of the traditional movement in favour of progress (Rimbaud, and "l'intuition rimbaldienne", provide a favourite quotation: "Quand tous nous, par delà les grèves et les monts, saluer la naissance du travail nouveau, la sagesse nouvelle, la fuite des tyrans et des démons, la fin de la superstition? . . .").

Thus the revelations concerning Thorez's private life are of no importance. The role and the myth are more significant than any attempt to get the real facts established. If it is true that in writing his autobiography Thorez used a ghost-writer, then we are told that in so doing he enlarged the basis and the scope of his writing in party terms. It is admitted that he had a weak personality. But a more forceful and intrusive personality might have found it impossible to play the same role in relation to the mass organization and ideology of the party.

In many ways, none of this is new. Annie Kriegel (to whom frequent reference is made) has already presented the French communists in ethnographic terms and has analysed many of the aspects of party ritual. For many years before that, Aragon expressed the lyricism of the loyalty inherent in party membership and it is obvious that *la camaraderie, le tutoiement*, the annual *fête de l'Humanité*, the legends of the Resistance, the attachment to Soviet Russia and the vision of a bourgeoisie which has already betrayed France and is ready to betray it again, are all aspects of a forceful and constant movement which needs to be studied as a sociological and cultural manifestation. It is disappointing that Jacqueline Mer should be so content to repeat what others have said.

For example, her discussion of the *fête de l'Humanité* is nothing more than a rehash of an article in *La Nouvelle Critique* and her argument in favour of the particularly French loyalties of the communists simply a selection of quotations from speeches by Thorez. Her claim, that presentation could have been more lucidly pointed). But the chosen scope of the book and some of its interpretations are open to question.

Dependence on Sturzo means that no other party leaders come to life; the book at times comes close to biography. The singularity of the PPI's "party structure and tightly knit mass following" is mentioned but not studied, apart from a few references to lower clergy and "white" trade unionists; we hear little more of Christian Democratic political thought, and the vein of Catholic Integralism is ignored.

On the PPI's difficult relationship with the Vatican—ostentatiously detached in everyday matters, yet in supreme moments amenable to papal control—Professor Molony agrees with earlier historians that the Vatican to begin with did no more than tolerate the party; soon —especially after the accession of Pius XI early in 1922—the party came to seem "not only expendable . . . but more positively it had to be dismantled". He goes further than some historians in giving as a main reason for papal distrust of the PPI the party's silence on the Roman Question. Though the relevant Vatican archives are closed and one cannot be sure it seems doubtful whether by the early twentieth century the Roman Question was quite the obsession Professor Molony suggests. After 1917 fear of Bolshevism seems to have been at least as strong a motive.

The author's residence in Italy no doubt explains Italianisms like "prescinded from" ("conferences" (for "lectures"), "finality" (meaning "aim"), "recourse to the urns" (for "going to the polls"), and others yet. It does not explain why a publisher who charges nearly £8 for 200-odd pages of unjustified photo-offset failed to catch them.

The church vote

By John Rosselli

JOHN N. MOLONY :
The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy
225pp. Croom Helm. £7.95.

To anyone concerned with modern Italy few things are so crucial as the Italian Catholic tradition and the problem of integrating it, first into a state founded in defiance of the temporal power, and later into a labour movement for the greater part Marxist-inspired. The potential for a Catholic role in Italian politics was great from unification onwards; it was obscured only by the papal *non expedit*, which formally—and often in practice—kept Catholics from working the institutions of a state seen as a usurper. Within a year of its founding in 1918 the Partito Popolare Italiano, the first Catholic (though declaredly "aconfessional") party, had collected 100 parliamentary seats. It was at once a major force; but the period of upheaval which had brought it into being had also seen the launching of Fascism and the success, followed by break-up, of Italian socialism—forces, both of them, which the PPI was neither equipped to overcome nor able in any substantial sense to work with.

The PPI suffered from the ambiguities of a party united essentially by faith and holding together radical trade unionists and clerically-minded bankers; but it also suffered from its own newness and inexperience as well as from the failure to get to grips with rapid change that overtook so many in the immediate postwar years. The party entered the Nitti and Bonomi governments and, after the "march on Rome", the first Mussolini government. But its heart was not in such arrangements (which more than once foundered); the storms of a period of mounting violence were pulling it apart even before the Vatican forced, in 1923, the resignation of its founder-secretary, the Sicilian priest Don Luigi Sturzo, and shortly afterwards sent him into exile. The Christian Democratic core of the party soldiered on under Alcide De Gasperi, shedding the clerical conservatives who had opted for Fascism; it was finally smashed as the dictatorship tightened its hold in 1925-26.

The story is important and revealing, all the more so because the PPI reemerged in the Second World War as Christian Democracy, which ever since 1945 has been the dominant party of government. The need for a detailed history in English might have been supplied by translating Gabriele De Rosa's standard work. Instead John Molony, an Australian historian with a clear commitment to the inheritance of Pope John and the Second Vatican Council, has stepped in with an original work. His book is detailed month-by-month political history, based for the most part on the rich collection of Sturzo papers and on contemporary journals. Much of this detail is not readily available elsewhere in English (though its

A German is exiled from Germany to Germany, after having freely left the latter for the former in 1953. There are other bizarre aspects to the expulsion of the East German writer Wolf Biermann last year. *Es ist die Aufbruchstimmung Wolf Biermanns, die der . . . DDR.* (319pp. Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, DM. 12.80) is a well-edited and copious documentation of the reactions on both sides which reveals in fact, how problematical it is to talk of "sides". The response of the DKP in the West was so savage that it kept the DDR party newspaper supplied with copy: Peter Rose, as editor busily spoke of the DKP and the SED "producing" the Biermann affair between them. But both countries also manifested a groundswell of sympathy, which led Heinrich Böll to air "the possibility that there might come about a socialist unity of Germany" which possibility conservatives here, naturally regard as an impossibility" and behave accordingly. Roos indeed argues that Biermann has reopened the "German question" by "simultaneously attacking two ruling systems that mutually legitimate one another's existence". In his preface Günter Wallraff lends support: by denying Biermann's fears that living in the West would mean "the end of his literary work" and urging that he turn his satirical talents to his new home,

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Ben Witter
Nachts, wenn wir schlafen
36 Großstadtgeschichten

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TLS Commentary

The call to order

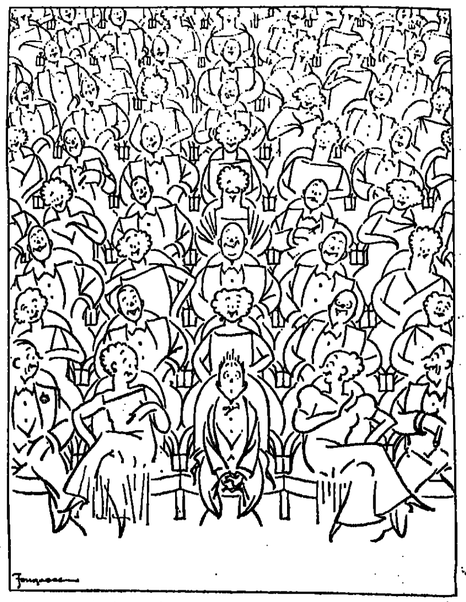
Taxonomy is an instinct more powerful than hunger: after ten days in an open boat, your average starving castaway would rather compose menus than strain plankton. Writing was invented for the purpose of inditing lists: literature is just a recreational by-product. Inspired by the wholesome desire to bring prose back to its roots, Irving Wallace and his children have commanded a large editorial task-force in the compilation of *The Book of Lists* (304pp. Cassell. £4.75). As well as their own work, they have solicited lists from a variety of celebrities: thus, Leon Uris contributes the twelve greatest Jews of all time (Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus Christ, Einstein, in that order) and Temple Fielding the thirteen least hospitable towns for tourists (Cardiff, deplorably, only comes third, after Brindisi and Calcutta; Wake up, Wales!).

Some lists are recherché, like the sixteen countries where sheep outnumber people; others fearsomely banal, like Marabel Morgan's ten ways for women to please men, and Robert (*Believe it or not!*) Ripley's books for a desert island. A Columbia Press readership survey rates *Pilgrim's Progress* as the most boring classic, a weary plod ahead of *Moby-Dick*, which flippers *Paradise Lost* into third place. None of these is in Henry Miller's ten greatest writers of all time, which stars Elie Faure and Marie Corelli; there are competing lists from Maugham, Malcolm Cowley and Clifton Fadiman; only Dostoevsky features on them all. Similarly predictable is the unanimity about *Battleship Potemkin* (*Bicycle Thieves* runs it close).

Madame Tussaud's provides the results of her annual popularity polls of goodies and baddies from 1929 to 1972. Hitler makes a fine showing, but is edged out of the latest hate-list by Jimmy Carter; over the years Enoch Powell has been busted by Idi Amin, a fact of little significance in the study of racial prejudice; among the heroes, Churchill, Kennedy and Joan of Arc form the hard core, with Nelson, Florence Nightingale, Jesus Christ and Robin Hood jostling for the remaining places; uniquely Moshe Dayan makes both lists in 1973, but is inexplicably omitted by Leon Uris.

Nobody is likely to use this book for its lists of lakes, waterfalls and capital cities, which is just as well, as the editors seem at times cavalier and credulous. Of their sixteen most-aged persons, only one is accepted by the scrupulous and sceptical *Guinness Book of Records*; and the roster of famous bottled messages includes the sailor's proposal of marriage launched in Southampton and fished up by its very author in Port Said, the which if you will believe, you will believe anything. The same might be said of the entire section on the supernatural. The twelve "All-time Best-selling or Distributed Books" do not include *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Mein Kampf* or the Koran; the figure for Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, supposedly world-wide, is only fractionally more than the US-only sales given in Hackett and Burke's *Best Sellers 1895-1975*—which cannot be right; on the other hand, the Wallaces give 28 million for C. M. Sheldon's *In His Steps* (1897) against US figures of eight million, which cannot be right either. (Higher on the list than you would imagine is Elbert Hubbard's *Message to Garcia*—50 million copies—a hortatory pamphlet distributed gratis by paternalistic factory-owners to their idle hands, and once issued to the entire Japanese Army.)

The enjoyable listings, however, are not the verifiable but the tendentious; the ten worst generals in history, which includes Gates (but not his antagonist Burgoyne), Gamelin, Hamilton of Gallipoli, and—from an embarrassingly rich field of Civil War incompetents—Burnside, who sent hundreds of men to their death trying to take a narrow bridge over a river shallow enough to wade through. The list of great generals excludes Fabius and Giap. Clifford Irving's great forgers include Clifford Irving but not Chatterton or Wise. There is a well-annotated list of ten possible identities for Jack the Ripper; a list of the six shrewd nations that receive military aid from China and the Soviet Union and Britain and the US; persons with extra limbs and digits, including the aptly named Jean "Dos Santos"; salutary but sadly incomplete list of countries that use torture; and a section on erotic achievement, very cheering apart from Dr Wardell Pomroy's Stopesless list of the ten best books about sex, which offers Comfort but little joy, leaning heavily on the clinical. In short, a cute but compelling book, ideal for insomniacs (twenty famous ones listed), and an agreeable deterrent to suicide (ten most common methods listed in order). When you learn that José Greco had four pairs of elasticized woollen trousers insured for $3,920, the world becomes more bearable.



"Now you, sir, in the front row of the stalls—let's hear you sing the chorus by yourself": a characteristic nightmare by the cartoonist Fougasse, one of whose favourite subjects was the odd man out, the little man caught on the wrong foot. From Fougasse (95pp. Elm Tree Books. £4.50) introduced and edited by Bevis Hillier, who describes Fougasse's instantly recognizable graphic style as "the pipe-cleaner embedded in the soft toy". After a spine injury in the First World War Fougasse drew, mainly for Punch, until his death in 1965, and was Punch's editor 1949-53. During the Second World War he gave his services free to the Ministry of Information, producing that most famous series of posters "Careless Talk Costs Lives" His real name was Kenneth Bird: a "fougasse" in the First World War was a rough and ready French bomb which might or might not go off. Kenneth Bird modestly felt the same was true of his cartoons.

Starting blocks

It may be normal for reviewers not to read books: it's quite uncommon for the authors not to have read them, but this unlikely distinction is one merit of *Forwards!* (126pp. Unexpected Developments. £1.50), a crypto-Dada enterprise by The Phantom Captain, with Neil Hornick at the wheel or astrogation console. The Phantom Captain, ("a collaboration of Vision Mongers, Environ Mentalists, and Entertainers of Ideas") solicited forewords to an unspecified work from fellow sprites in Coum, the John Bull Puncture Repair Kit, Monty Python's Flying Circus, and like-minded, like-named pataphysicist conceptualist groupuscules and persons. A number—including Tom Stoppard, Heathcote Williams, Quentin Crisp and Adrians Henri and Mitchell—responded; an open invitation in *Time Out* brought just one reply.

"What patterns might emerge? What connections? Does the format enable the writer to transcend format?", asks a pre-preface (or sixteenword). No: everyone seems to have tumbled to the realization that the forewords would be the book; that after prolonged throat-clearing would come silence. This has largely evoked a mood of sombre waggishness, a tone of pachydermatous embarrassment. "A metaphor for most of our lives, gentle reader", writes Peter Feldman; "Dear Neil and Joel and Shirley and Roland and ?" sighs Shirley Cameron; "I would have treated the subject quite differently of course. I would never have given such emphasis to the Brownie Camp disaster", asserts Jeff Nuttall; "het is geloof ik een uniek werk", claims Detlev Pols, incontrovertibly.

Not everyone is selfcongratulatory. Robert Ward preaches a cogent sermon: "The seventeenth century saw rising enthusiasm for the *Game With Undisclosed Rules*, namely Science, whereby a player set himself to discover what the rules were. In this time of ours we have the sport the *Game With No Rules* [whose] more obsessive players drift into the tragedy of abandoned choice. . . . This book is a move in the *Game With No Rules*. Consider it." Ivor Cutler is harsher: "This book is by a lot of people who are having difficulty in finding themselves lovable. How far you will enjoy it will depend, in part, on how successfully you can forget what I have said."

By contrast, the real forewords to real books that provide this volume with bulk and a modicum of charm radiate an unselfconscious certitude: "I have attempted in this volume to give an account of the interpretation of dreams"; "My dear young friends, this book is especially written for the help of those of you who, having entered at the 'straight gate', are learning to walk in the 'narrow way'"; "There is little doubt that chicken sexing has come to stay."

Fifty years on . . .

Julius Levine — *"a study of Judaism"—and* Jane Carroll—*a study of the Sinn Fein—were among the novels reviewed in the* TLS *of October 6, 1927:*

It is in fact a discerning and sympathetic study of Judaism, hardly so closely studied from the life since George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. This remains true, although Lord Lovine, the millionaire Jewish banker, who shares with his only son Julius the most prominent place in the book, is professedly a Christian; while Julius is left at the close, after an Indian tour, determined to read Mr Claude Montefiore and devote his life to helping those who strive "to strengthen Christianity with the power of Judaism or to enrich Judaism with the grace and sweetness of Christianity". . . .

The Hebraic type here depicted has one characteristic which is not found so strongly in the Disraelian Jew. It can be traced both in Julius and in his father the baron. The blunt Englishman has undoubtedly through the ages discerned, or thought he discerned, an air of obsequiousness in the Jew, an intense desire to please. In the persons of Lord Lovine and his son one is keenly conscious of this all through; but the author makes it not a despicable but a lovable quality. The abounding amiability of the baron and his humorous naïvety—his attitude towards golf is always enjoyable—combine to give a pleasant savour to the novel. It is the same with Julius. All through he illustrates attractively his housemaster's report of him as easily influenced, disposed to hero worship, "infinitely too sensitive ever to oppose himself to the general view of things", and, it must be added, incapable of standing up against anti-semitic insults. . . .

The heroine of Mr Temple Thurston's *Jane Carroll* is not so much Jane Carroll, witty, courageous and magnificent as she was, as Ireland, the Ireland of the black days after the war, when the whole country lived in a sinister atmosphere of murder and intrigue. To Jane Carroll, a favourite of London society, the wife of a famous historian, John Meadden, when he walked into the drawing-room of her house in St James's Square, represented a way of living and thinking to which she was a stranger. He, one of the leaders of the IRA, had come to London on a safe-conduct pass, and the dinner-party at which it was arranged that he should meet a member of the Cabinet and discuss the possibilities of peace was staged at her house. He seemed to her then, as he argued with passionate selflessness for the cause of Sinn Fein, something young and wild and free caught up in a mesh of inferior texture, even as she had fallen in love with the man she had fallen in love with the romantic idea of Ireland. . . .

Towards the end the story becomes frankly melodramatic, but Mr Thurston, knowing his place and his time, wisely refuses to be frightened at melodrama. John Medden, like Michael Collins, is murdered by his own countrymen, and Jane, asking pathetically why it was and who did it, is left with the dreadful significance of Father Hanrahan's remark, a remark which lights up the fanatic that lies hidden in every Irishman:

> A man may serve his people and his cause and he can fail to serve the Lord God. . . . O'Callaghan and Clancy, the two mayors of Limerick, were killed and they were both Sinn Feiners, and there's nothing to show to this day who did it. And that's how 'twill be with John Medden.

A corporation and its discontents

By Noël Annan

TOM BURNS:
The BBC
Public Institution and Private World
352pp. Macmillan. £8.95.

In the early 1960s Tom Burns was invited by the BBC to take part in a series of conferences about the workings of the Corporation, and in 1963 he interviewed about two hundred of their staff to discover in what ways individual members considered themselves to be committed to the BBC. How, he continued, did these commitments when taken together produce social systems in the form of internal politics or careers? And how did these systems interact upon each other? He found interviewing the staff unusually agreeable, because they were not only articulate and verbose but used to working out their ideas through discussion. But the BBC, so open to new ideas in some ways, is also notoriously stuffy. Standing on their undoubted rights the Corporation forbade Professor Burns to publish his report, and enjoined him to close the mouth of anyone to whom he showed it—"fascinating, reasonable and balanced" as the BBC management told him that they found it to be. Then in the 1970s, when another generation was in power, the new Director General not only agreed to Professor Burns publishing his findings but asked him to carry out a new set of interviews and compare his results with those of ten years ago. The *BBC: Public Institution and Private World* therefore spans a decade in which much has changed, and is one of the most important documents ever to be published about the Corporation.

Indeed its importance transcends the objective. By using the technique of the anthropologist rather than the sociologist Professor Burns makes us see the problems of the BBC through the eyes of those who work there; but by relating these problems to many of the classic works of modern sociology he also makes us realize how much the BBC reflects the social tensions which agitate all British institutions today. Too much of the academic research into the media is deplorable; it is biased and cumbered with portentous references to the literature which on examination appears to have been used as an ammunition dump for the author's own personal campaign; and it displays ignorance of what human beings actually do and of the forces which induce them to behave in this rather than that manner. Professor Burns's work is in a totally different class. It is worth reading by those who have no direct interest in broadcasting simply as a study of an institution and its management.

According to Professor Burns the old spirit of Reith—of public service broadcasting in which the BBC identified with the needs of the nation—is dead. What killed it and what has taken its place? Competition with ITV was certainly one of the causes of its death. Although competition between the two systems resembles one athlete in a race pacing another rather than an uninhibited dash to be the first to break the tape—for out-and-out competition would be far too expensive and make life more difficult for both systems—Professor Burns admits that once the BBC had lost its monopoly its claim to stand loftily above political and national conflicts could no longer be accepted. The ratings required presentation to be given precedence over content, interviews to be more sensational, the original aims of BBC2 to be scrapped and the Third Programme phased out. The top positions went to journalists, and light entertainment came to be regarded, not as a commodity in its own right, but as ground bait to catch and hold an audience for the evening.

But far more influential than competition has been the syndicalization of working life in Britain. Reith's conception of public service depended on unquestioned hierarchy: inferiors in production accepted the decisions, strategy and ethos of their superiors in the administrative stucture. Today trade-union power within the BBC has already ensured that a decreasing percentage of the revenue for the licence fee goes to artists as the percentage of costs for staff salaries and wages rise. It has also led, in Professor Burns's opinion, through managerial weakness to the worst defect of BBC life—the development of a grading scheme which makes such minute distinctions between jobs that it creates bitterness and dissatisfaction. In its attempt to be "fair" to individuals the grading scheme produces such intolerable inequities that staff spend much of their time trying to defeat the system. Then, again, the growth of bureaucracy within the BBC has enabled trade unions to make their power felt in areas where a generation ago they would not have been seen, simply for the reason that their pressure often gets things done when line management seems to get snarled up and produces no results. But naturally the first concern of the trade unions in the industry is not with promoting the best possible service to the public but with protecting and augmenting the jobs open to its members and obtaining better conditions and wages for them.

Just as trade unions intervene more in decision-taking, so the staff in their professional capacities want to impose their own standards and conceptions on the Corporation. Several of Burns's best chapters explain how the word "professional" has replaced the term "public service". Using Norton Long's "The Local Community as an Ecology of Games" and Everett Hughes's "The Sociological Eye", he argues that people who do a particular job like to feel that their work is done as part of a system which society (or the organization) orders and approves and which carries with it certain moral responsibilities: once such work becomes morally legitimate, those who do it declare that it must be done in this way and not in that and may well end by challenging the judgment of their superiors. "The BBC", says Professor Burns, "is riddled with problems of moral legitimacy attaching to different kinds of work." Soon staff claim that only a professional can judge the work of a professional: and this together with what sociologists call the "latent reversal role" is at the root of much of the so-called arrogance of broadcasters. A waiter *should* defer to the clients of the restaurant, but he ends by hating and despising them: broadcasters *should* study the wants and needs of the public, but end by calling them moronic or by picturing "a typical television audience" as "Mum sitting in the best armchair drinking cocoa with a teenage boy on the sofa trying to get his hand up his girl's skirts".

With contempt for the audience goes contempt for the Governors or with anyone in the bureaucratic hierarchy who attempts to wave the old flag of public service. It becomes a mark of professional integrity not to "refer up" and thus subject a programme made by professionals to the interference of amateurs. This in turn, so Professor Burns detects, has affected the outlook of the top brass. It has changed in the same way that the mood of the mandarins of Whitehall has changed: from a totally dedicated belief in the ideals they pursued to a kind of stoic resignation and admission that other groups within the system may defeat them.

Professionalism brought about its revenges. Professor Burns suggests that the first decision to shift from Reith's ideals were brought about by Donald Baverstock and the original *Tonight* team, which set out to mirror society and not to tell it what it should do. But Baverstock, Grace Wyndham Goldie and their teams did not see themselves as revolting against a tradition: like Martin Luther before them, they imagined they were sloughing off the accretions which over the years had adhered to the True Faith. The sense of dedication to the BBC remained. They wanted to thwart the philistines and Tite Barnacles in the BBC who had assumed control over output.

But ten years later such rebels were no longer dedicated to the Corporation. The dissident voices already being heard in society were loudest in the BBC. An underground press flourished. The news and current affairs departments were weakening themselves by perpetual self-examination. Were they guilty of collusion with the Establishment in the way they presented British society and its problems to the public? Or could they be accused of a vague populism in which they were always putting authority in the pillory? Did they convey BBC stereotypes, so that the ideas which the public was supposed to have were merely the current ideas of those who ran the BBC? Perhaps the very notion of impartiality in news and documentation was absurd.

It was therefore scarcely any wonder that the broadcasters found themselves in political trouble. Since programmes came to be regarded as snares for capturing audiences, commentators began to talk of the terrible power of broadcasting. One after another aspect of life began to be politicized through pressure groups; demands for participation became deafening; and a movement grew to "bring it home" to the broadcasters under control". Its voice could be heard in the Report of the Select Committee for Nationalized Industries which examined commercial television in 1972, in the writings of such fluent writers in the media as Anthony Smith, and in the councils of interest bodies such as the IBI. The BBC was by the 1970s inescapably part of politics, and many of its staff no longer considered that they had a primary duty to be loyal to the Corporation or to its interpretation of the public interest. They declared that they would be betraying their sense of integrity if they did not explain society in accordance with their professional standards.

One further development opened out the faults in the stress of the BBC still wider. Reith had imposed an organizational structure in which the "creative" staff produced programmes but finance remained strictly in the hands of the administration—just as in universities before the war academic policy was the concern of the Senate but the means of implementing it lay in the hands of the Council and their finance officers. In the 1970s the BBC stood this policy on its head: the objective now was to make the producers responsible for financial control. In the past reorganization had always meant reorganization of the different segments of the BBC in terms of a trade-off between the administration and those engaged in output. But now, as the costs of performance became more important than total production costs, the producers were to be made responsible for the costs of their programmes above and below the line. The more say producers obtained in the shape of their programmes and the more lavish their demands for scenery or film grew, the more a corporate strategy was needed to control pressure for increased costs and to convert individual programme planning into continuous production lines on which costs were monitored. Perhaps Sir Hugh Greene's greatest achievement was not only to develop this system but to see that when it became fully operative those who had been producers, rather than those who had come up through the administration, were in control. In 1973 all thirty-seven of the top managers (engineering, finance and personal functions excepted) had been in production.

So now "producers", rather than one aspect of production, such as outside broadcasts or drama, were in control. Yet inescapably, since the conflict now was not between individual departments fighting for their slice of the cake, but between all departments and management, a gulf began to yawn between the producer and the superstructure of director, controller, departmental heads, and all their supporting bureaucracy. Everything was now technology on the studio floor in television became more complicated and broke up the old social patterns of work. The producer could no longer work to a single real crisis on the studio floor; the functions of the "gaffer" came to be distributed among more and more specialists and their assistants.

Professor Burns concludes that in the past ten years the greatest change in the BBC was not in the last analysis the new managerial structure, nor the shift in power towards the managing director and controllers and away from the departmental barons, nor even the decision in millinery and the increase in the size of the Corporation. It was "the breakdown of the ordinary institutions of social interaction between a variety of people engaged in programme production." The effectiveness of management control in an organization depends on the ways in which people talk, come to conclusions, act and relate to each other. The new emphasis upon professionalism and cost-effectiveness transformed them. Where previously accommodations of various kinds had grown up between management and staff, under the new order organizational processes tended to be more formal. As a result an instruction now became not the signal for action but for discussion and argument—discussion which in days gone by would have taken place informally before any instruction was issued.

It is a common error to imagine that sociologists exist to present "solutions" to the problems which they have analysed. Durkheim's celebrated essay on suicide did nothing to lower the suicide rate, and Professor Burns wisely contents himself with one general conclusion. Indeed, the first reaction of management on reading this book might well be paralysis. Every reorganization or reform, every intention to improve conditions or halt a deterioration in relations, is certain to bring in its train consequences which cannot be foreseen; or, if they can, only in the dim, obscure and ominous form in which oracles in ancient times foretold the future. For instance, Professor Burns believes that less attention should be paid in the BBC to the ratings and more to audience research; yet in another place he warns that to multiply the sources of criticism already torrentially would put an intolerable strain upon

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programme makers. Or, to give another instance, the famous complacency of the BBC is created by officials making an autistic world out of their own activities and beliefs: yet at the same time these officials, beleaguered by criticism, have all too little self-confidence left. When you ask a sociologist to recommend rather than analyse and explain, he is likely to answer, if he is as honest as Professor Burns, that whatever action you take will have the defects of its merits. Not specially comforting. That is not to say that it is impossible to tease some lessons out of his analysis; and just as the recent Committee on the Future of Broadcasting found Professor Burns's work helpful, so should the BBC. But it is not the sort of study which ends with a tabulated set of facile recommendations.

Indeed Professor Burns's one general conclusion is somewhat paradoxical. His book begins with a curiously ambivalent first chapter. It is strongly critical of Reith for creating a BBC subservient to the Establishment while taking unction to himself for standing aloof from the biased view of politics expressed by the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Parties. For instance, Professor Burns reminds us how the Postmaster-General, in the aftermath of the General Strike, forbade the BBC to broadcast on matters of political, industrial or religious controversy—though he omits to add that this draconian ukase was rescinded the following year. For him the constitution of the BBC is not, as it has been praised so often for being, a shining example of political pragmatism. It is a "masterpiece of calculated 'imprecision'" which, resting as it does on a "lexical nicety", relieves the British of the more difficult task of enunciating principles and defending them by reasoned argument; and part of the BBC's troubles flow from the fact that the much-praised device of the Government appointing Governors, who both represent the public interest and are ultimately responsible for the running of the Corporation, was originally a wheeze for promoting radio broadcasting without burdening the Government or commercial undertakings with the cost of developing a service. Yet Professor Burns calls on the BBC to reacquire its sense of mission as a Corporation dedicated to providing a public service in almost the same spirit which inspired Reith. Only then will the Corporation be able to harmonize the conflicting values and purposes which are analysed in this book. Only by freeing the BBC from its client relation to the Government and from its subservience to the cultural Establishment, can the BBC once again speak for the nation.

But can the BBC, or for that matter the IBA and its companies, free themselves from Government and the cultural Establishment? Can they do so any more than the Arts Council? Any Quango can permit some of its activities to follow dissident, unorthodox lines, but by definition its mainstream activities are certain to reflect what at any given time the institutions of the country consider acceptable. The BBC cannot put itself in opposition to whatever Government is in power even if its revenue is produced by a licence fee and not through direct taxation. Nor is it possible for any public body to free itself of the charge that it reflects the views of the Establishment. The American networks are not so directly threatened by Government, but they are far less disrespectful of authority than the BBC or ITV.

Moreover, there were compensations that were the direct consequences of Reith's rule. Overbearing as he was and unabashed in his determination through his own political ambition to keep in with the powers that be, he could justify his policy when the Second World War came by the fact that the news put out by the BBC was almost universally regarded as honest and as scrupulous in regard to factual truth as it was possible to be. Current attacks on the BBC's impartiality and attempt to preserve balance are in fact sinister. For what some of these critics have in mind is all too transparent: the slanting of news to follow a line which would consistently put the authorities in the wrong in whatever walk of life was being reported.

Much as is often made of the role Reith played in the General Strike—with the consequent deduction that never again should the Corporation be so monstrously one-sided in its treatment of a national issue—it still remains true that the BBC cannot be impartial when one side in a political conflict is intent on breaking the peace; and this Professor Burns recognizes. Even if in some of the corridors of Kensington House a vague odour of populism hovers in the air, the majority of those working there recognize that, in their own words, a consistent "adversary stance" to government in the widest sense would be suicidal to the independence of broadcasting. It is not so much that the Government would intervene directly or indirectly. But the broadcasters would lose the confidence of the public, who are by no means as consistently hostile to authority as is sometimes assumed; and the barrage of flak which would hit the broadcasting authorities would make a confrontation either with the Government or with their producers inevitable.

When one looks at an institution from the inside it is natural enough to conclude that the major disconomy or discontent is caused by that most weary of all diagnoses—"failure of communication". That is in effect what Professor Burns finds when he finds the major malaise of the BBC is the gulf which is growing between the programme makers and the managers and administrators needed to organize two television and four radio channels, as well as a series of regional production centres. Nor is this conclusion false.

But if one is to ask what more than anything else stands in the way of a recreation of that spirit of public service which Professor Burns rightly would like to see revive, then a serious candidate must be syndicalism. If every pressure-group determines to get the maximum its power permits in salaries and wages, increase in its membership and control over the output, then there will be fewer resources available for programmes and for the satisfaction of the public. The temptation then becomes a congeries of warring factions united only in seeing that less money is spent in production costs and more on themselves.

The BBC is entering an exceedingly difficult period in its history. It is faced with the unlubricated competition of an ITV whose revenue is buoyant and which is able to offer contracts to talent far beyond the capability of its rival. At the same time through Government policy it is unable to satisfy the demands of its staff for a better deal and thus strains their loyalty to the limit. How far in these circumstances it can again find that self-confidence which enabled it to diffuse among its staff the notion that they made audible the heart-beat of the nation is exceedingly hard to see. And yet such is the resilience of that institution that it may well weather this as it has weathered other storms.

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GÜNTER GRASS

three poems translated by Michael Hamburger

Demeter

With her eyes open
the goddess recognizes
how blind is heaven.

Around her, eyelashes, petrified, cast shadows,
No lid will drop and make sleep.

Always horror
since she saw the god
here, on the fallow field
where the ploughshare was conceived.

Round about, the mule is willing over its barley.
That does not change.

We, fallen out of the cycle,
take a photograph,
overexposed.

Too much

Between the festivities,
as soon as it's late enough, quiet,
I read Orwell's utopian novel 1984,
which I first read in 1949
quite differently.

Nearby, next to the nutcracker and the tobacco packet,
lies a statistical book,
whose figures simplify the world population—
how it's fed, or not fed,
up to the year 2000.
At intervals,
when I reach for my tobacco
or crack a hazelnut,
problems catch up with me
which, compared to Big Brother
and the global protein shortage,
are small
but won't give up their private tittering.

Now I read about methods of interrogation in the near future.
Now I want to memorize figures:
current mortality patterns
among children in the Far East,
now from the edges I start unpicking—
because before the festivities our abated rows
were tied up with string in boxes—Ilsebill's wishes . . .

Nut shells half-fill the ashtray.
That's too much, all of it.
Something has to be cut, India
or our Oligarchic Collectivism
or our family Christmas.

At the end

Men who, as the saying goes,
think a thing to the end,
have always thought a thing to the end:
men for whom not aims—possibly possible ones—
but the final aim—a worry-free society—
sets up the winning-post behind mass graves;
men, who from the aggregate of dated setbacks
draw one conclusion: the smoke-blurred final victory
on thoroughly scorched earth;
men who at one of the daily meetings,
when the coarsest thing has proved technically . . .
resolve on the final solution,
have resolved on it factually manfully;
men with an overall vision,
whom importance dogs;
great extravagant men
whom no one, no hearth-warmed slipper
has been able to hold,
men with a steep idea that's followed flatly by actions,
at last—we wonder—have come to an end?

The poems are from Günter Grass's new novel *Der Butt* (The Flounder) which will be published in Ralph Manheim's English translation by Secker and Warburg sometime next year.

To the Editor

Johnson's Dictionary

Sir,—There may be a case (wrong, in my view) for thinking of Samuel Johnson as a conservative in linguistic and lexicographical matters, but if there is, it won't be sustained by the arguments Anthony Burgess brings to its support (September 30). Of course in holding up Charles Richardson as a model of the new school of lexicography Mr Burgess reveals he's really only losing an old tease, but the indecision is characteristically oblique, and may be missed. May I comment on three points?

Deplorably, Johnson's *Dictionary* "tried to fix standards of usage . . .", and indeed in some respects it succeeded for about a century, and longer for spelling. The aim, however "impure" to a scientist of language, is not ignoble. I speculate that if the devil offered Mr Burgess the authority to slow down the rate at which *disinterested* or *refute* are sliding from use he would be tempted. Of course he would know it was no good in the long run, and contrary to what he imagines, Johnson knew too. I owe Swift, not Johnson, who wrote "if [the language] were once refined to a certain standard, perhaps there might be Ways found out to fix it for ever" (*A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue*, 1712). Johnson saw one of the tasks of his *Dictionary* precisely to give access to the language of Bacon, Hooker, Milton, and Boyle *when that particular form of the language had passed away*. Indeed, he despairs even of the possibility of accurately recording the language while "some words are budding, and some falling away".

Johnson's English in the *Dictionary*, Mr Burgess says, misapplying Johnson's words in the preface, is "drawn from" the undefiled wells from which writers from Sir Philip Sidney to the Restoration drank". The inference is that Johnson, being conservative, was not interested in drawing on the language of his own day. In fact, three of the ten most quoted authors—Addison, Swift, and Pope—were contemporaries of Johnson. Other eighteenth-century writers he quotes are Charles Arbuthnot, John Arbuthnot, Francis Atterbury, John Ayliffe, Jane Barker, Richard Bathurst, James Beattie, Richard Bentley, Bishop Berkeley, Richard Blackmore, Lord Bolingbroke, Henry Bourne, Samuel Boyse . . . do I need to go through the alphabet? Of writers of the first or second rank, I can think only of Churchill, Collins, Hume, Smollett, and Sterne, whom Johnson does not quote in the first or revised editions (1755, 1773).

The *Dictionary* is "more of an autobiography than a work of lexicography". I supply the evidence on which this bold statement is based so that your readers can judge it. There are about fifty quotations from Johnson's work in the *Dictionary*, many disguised as "anonymous", and about quarter removed on revision. In addition there are a handful of references to Lichfield, twenty or so prejudicial definitions, a dozen or so forthright opinions on say Gallicisms, and a few jokes ("IRONY . . . A mode of speech . . . as, *Bolingbroke was a holy man*"). Perhaps 200 articles among 40,000.

KEITH WALKER.

University College London, Gower Street WC1E 6BT.

'The Doctor'

Sir,—Christopher Ricks (August 12) rightly lambasts the host of errors in a recent literary reference book. But I wish he hadn't begun his review with what, if not an error, ought to be regarded, in serious literary discussion today, as at best a solecism.

"Dr Johnson"—or "the Doctor" or "dear, crusty old Doctor Sam"—belongs to the far-off time when the man of letters, though declining, had not yet fallen. True, Johnson had a couple of honorary LL.Ds, from Dublin and Oxford. As many other writers have had. Yet we don't habitually speak of Dr Wordsworth or Dr Ruskin or Dr T. S. Eliot. When a writer attains a certain eminence, we do him the honour of removing irrelevant handles from his name. "Let me hear no more of him", Johnson said of some huck. "This is the fellow who made the index to my *Rambler*s, and set down the name of Milton thus: Milton, John." Let us be clear, in the *TLS* anyway, of "Dr Samuel Johnson", or, worse, "Sam", than we do of "Dr Bill Wordsworth".

"But his contemporaries called him 'Dr Johnson'." They also spoke of "Dr Goldsmith", to whom, as a medical practitioner, the term was more appropriate. But *we* write merely "Goldsmith". Like a sensible man, Johnson had no taste for such honorifics. Of his Dublin degree, Hawkins writes, "He was as little pleased to be called Doctor in consequence of it as he was with the title of Dominie", referring to his short unhappy career as a schoolmaster. I once suggested that Boswell, when he changed the "Mr Johnsons" of his MS journal of the Hebrides tour to "Dr Johnsons" in the printed version, did so from an unconscious wish to downgrade his father figure. The use of such labels has sometimes been a form of snide denigration. After Edith Sitwell was made an honorary DLitt, it was not her admirers who regularly wrote "Dr Sitwell". Even yet F. R. Leavis is sometimes reminded of his gaffe in taking a PhD degree while it was still unfashionable at Oxbridge to do so.

Possibly Boswell's provincial relish for any sort of handle to a name had something to do with it: on the Continent he sometimes gave himself an "Honourable" to which he was not entitled. But his discussion of the matter is curious. After finding it "remarkable" that Johnson never used the "Doctor"—yet should not we respect his usage?—Boswell continues:

> I once observed on his table a letter directed to him with the addition of *Esquire*, and objected to it as being a designation inferior to that of Doctor; but he checked me and seemed pleased with it, because, as I conjectured, he liked to be sometimes taken out of the class of literary men, and to be merely *gentecel—un gentilhomme comme un autre* (*Life*, ed Hill-Powell, II, 332n).

Like other such conjectures by Boswell, this probably tells us more about Boswell's psychology than Johnson's. Johnson entirely concurred with Voltaire in scorning Congreve's "despicable foppery in desiring to be considered not as an author but a gentleman".

A well-meaning friend once gave me a plate depicting a rosy-cheeked Doctor Sam seated in his favourite chair at the Cheshire Cheese (there is no evidence he ever set foot in the place), puffing contentedly at a churchwarden pipe (he never smoked in his life, and once remarked, in terms that should appeal to modern crusaders, "It is a shocking thing blowing smoke out of our mouths into other people's mouths, eyes, and nose, and having the same thing done to us"). I am thinking of having replicas of it made to present to scholars who feel the "Dr Johnson" tradition ought to be preserved.

While on the subject of misguided nomenclature: in your same issue Howard Erskine-Hill has much to say about "the Augustan age". I anticipate a flood of protests from indignant classicists, pointing out that the Emperor Augustus reigned from 27 BC to AD 14, not, as Mr Erskine-Hill seems to think, in the 1660s.

DONALD GREENE.

Department of English, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007.

Carroll's Logic

Sir,—As I read his informative review of *Lewis Carroll's Symbolic Logic* (August 26), I was amused to notice that Professor W. V. Quine makes an error about the Barber Shop Paradox. The error really should, in justice to the ancient controversy surrounding this puzzle, be corrected.

Quine states that the Barber Shop Paradox presented in *Lewis Carroll's Symbolic Logic*, together with correspondence about it between Carroll and John Cook Wilson, does not concern "the celebrated paradox about shaving", but "is a flimsy thing, and can puzzle no one who is clear in his mind about 'if'".

Quite the contrary: there is only one Barber Shop Paradox. Yet the surprise—which no doubt is what threw Quine off—is that the celebrated paradox about shaving *is indeed* a flimsy thing.

This becomes readily apparent only when Carroll's eight different versions of the Barber Shop Paradox (most of them never previously published) are joined together—as they are in *Lewis Carroll's Symbolic Logic*—and then compared with the model problems in Venn, Jevons, and John Neville Keynes which Carroll used in building it.

W. W. BARTLEY III.

California State University, Hayward, California 94542.

More Letters appear on Page 1150

Among this week's contributors

NORL ANNAN was the Chairman of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting.

ALFRED APPEL, JR's books include *The Annotated Lolita* and *Nabokov's Dark Cinema*.

DAVID BLACKBOURN is a Lecturer in History at Queen Mary College, London.

MALCOLM BOWIE is the author of *Henri Michaux*, 1973.

ERNEST K. BRAMSTED's books include *Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda, 1925-1945*, 1965.

DENIS BRASS is Senior Lecturer in Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Bristol.

A. E. CAMPBELL's books include *Great Britain and the United States, 1895-1903*, 1960, and *America Comes of Age*, 1971.

CHRISTOPHE CAMPOS's *The View of France* was published in 1965.

J. M. COCKING is the author of *Marcel Proust*, 1956.

GEORGE CRAIG is a Lecturer in French at the University of Sussex.

MARTIN ESSLIN's *Artaud* and *An Anatomy of Drama* were published last year.

GAVIN EWART's collections of poems include *Be My Guest*, 1975, and *No Fool Like an Old Fool*, 1976.

PETER FAWCETT is a Lecturer in French at the University of Leicester.

ROBERT GIBSON is the author of *The Land Without a Name*, 1975.

MICHAEL HAMBURGER's anthology of his own translations, *German Poetry 1910-1975*, has just been published.

ERICH HELLER's *The Poet and the Poet's Self* was published last year.

R. W. J. HEMMINGS's *The Life and Times of Emile Zola* has just been published.

MICHAEL HOWARD's books include *The Continental Commitment*, 1972, and *War in European History*, 1976.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College, London.

MICHAEL LEIFER is the author of *The Foreign Relations of the New States*, 1974.

ROGER LITTLE is the editor of *Saint-John Perse: Exil*, 1973.

PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Céline*, 1975.

BRIAN MONTGOMERY's *A Field-Marshal in the Family* was published in 1973.

ROBERT MORLEY is appearing in *Evergone Talks to Robert Morley* at Brighton, and next week at Richmond Theatre.

JEREMY NOAKES is the author of *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony 1921-1933*, 1971.

VIOLET POWELL's *Within the Family Circle* was published last year.

MAURICE RICHARDSON's *Little Victims* was published in 1968.

JOHN ROSASLLI is the author of *Lord William Bentinck*, 1974.

VERNON SCANNELL's *Not Without Glory: Poets of the Second World War* was published last year.

JOHN STATHATOS is the editor-translator of *Six Modern Greek Poets*, 1975.

EMMA TENNANT's novels include *The Last of the Country House Murders*, 1975, and *Hotel de Dream*, 1976.

IGOR VINOGRADOFF edited the correspondence of the Emperors Alexander III and Nicholas II with Prince V. P. Meshchevsky for the *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 1962 and 1964.

G. M. WILSON is a Research Assistant at the Armouries of the Tower of London.

FRANCIS WYNDHAM's *Out of the War* was published in 1975.

THEODORE ZELDIN's second volume of *France 1848-1945* has just been published.

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A Shorter CBEL

Sir,—A single-volume *Shorter CBEL* is now under consideration, to be based on the five-volume *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* which appeared between 1969 and 1977. I should be grateful for any corrections sent to me here, citing volume and column. All suggestions will be gratefully received, whether from contributors or others, but I regret to say that additions cannot be considered or corrections acknowledged.

GEORGE WATSON.
St John's College, Cambridge.

'Trollope and Politics'

Sir,—A. O. J. Cockshut may be quite right to abuse John Halperin's *Trollope and Politics* (August 5), but he chooses an unfortunate point on which to take Professor Halperin to task for ignorance of Victorian politics. Professor Halperin says: "Like Palmerston and Russell, Palliser is not known as an orator", and is fully confirmed by Jasper Ridley's life of Palmerston: "he definitely established the reputation, which he never lost, of being a bad speaker. . . . One of the reasons why everyone was so impressed by Palmerston's Don Pacifico speech in 1850 was that it was so unexpected."

Mr Cockshut is right to remind us that "very difficult questions always arise when we try to equate a real person with an imaginary one". But far worse ones arise if we try to deny any correspondence in a writer's mind between his creation and some fairly obvious historically observed source personality. In his book on Trollope, Mr Cockshut tries to deny that Daubeny and Gresham are based on Disraeli and Gladstone, entering particularly into an argument that Disraeli would never have tampered with the Church establishment.

Yet Disraeli's habit of proposing measures he and his party should "never" have supported would have been recognized instantly by any Victorian reader. To satisfy Mr Cockshut's historical sense it seems that a fictional character may only be identified with a historical personage (as his attack on Professor Halperin shows) if a twentieth-century historian's rather than a nineteenth-century newspaper reader's view of him is given.

Mr Cockshut's apparent insistence on precision is not, in fact, scholarly for one good reason. It obscures Trollope's mode of presenting politics, which included fleshing out the parties in his books with leaders who were identifiably the same sort of men as the known politicians of the day, and who might, if observed with half-closed eyes, be seen as rough sketches with respect to their public lives alone. And in this sense it is neither strikingly original nor the least bit absurd of Professor Halperin to propose that Palmerston lies behind Palliser.

MARTIN A. FIDO.
Faculty of Arts and General Studies, The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Bridgetown, Barbados.

Sonnet 146

Sir,—To the ninety-nine recensions by Theodore Redpath and W. J. Ingram in their excellent editions of Shakespeare's sonnets, I should like to add the one hundredth correction to the space that the printers apparently left for us in 146. In place of :

Poore soule the center of my sinfull earth,

My sinfull earth these rebbelll powres that thee array,

I propose, "Braved by the rebbell powres . . .". Like "array", "Braved" records well with its siege metaphor in the third line, "Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth", and with the adornment metaphor in the fourth, "Painting thy outward walls so costlia gay". For "brave" in the sense "defy" and the sense "deck out" were alike available to Shakespeare, and he uses both in Sonnet 12 (lines 14 and 2 respectively). "Braved" meaning "challenged" is used in both *The Taming of the Shrew* (5.1.121) and *King John* (4.2.243), while a not irrelevant conjunction of "bravery" and "cost" occurs in *As You Like It* (2.7.80). A line in *Macbeth* does little to clarify the connection between finery and siege, "Hang our banners on the outward walls" ; and finally, we might take from *The Revenger's Tragedy* the joke about "costly three-piled flesh" to remind us that the shell of earth arrays us in our carnal condition.

It may be, of course, that others since Ingram and Redpath made their account, have been visited with the same thought. In which case I offer this as a tiny corroborative recognition.

PHILIP BROCKBANK.
University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD.

'Maledicta'

Sir,—From such an attack (Letters, September 30), who needs defence? With the effective support of Mr Amis's predictably malefactive testimony, my cause (no Shakespearean double entendres) may rest.

RANDOLPH QUIRK.
University College London, Gower Street, WC1E 6BT.

Middle English Prose

Sir,—For some time discussions have been going on between scholars in Great Britain, North America and elsewhere as to the feasibility of undertaking an *Index of Middle English Prose*. The lack of such a work has long been felt among medievalists, most obviously by students of literature, history, science, religion and philology. But the enormous scope and practical problems associated with such an undertaking have hitherto prevented significant progress.

I would now like to announce the establishment of an Advisory Committee of senior medievalists, under the chairmanship of Professor Derek Pearsall of the University of York, which will supervise the preparation of such an *Index*. This committee has appointed me General Editor of the work.

May I appeal, through your columns, for the support of all those interested in this undertaking. I am keen to hear from all those who might feel able to contribute to such a project. I would be especially grateful to hear from any owners of manuscripts containing Middle English prose apart from major institutional collections. We are anxious that our bibliographical survey of such prose should be exhaustive, encompassing, so far as is possible, both public and private collections.

A. S. G. EDWARDS.
University of Victoria, PO Box 1700, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 2Y2.

David Hume

Sir,—I fear that your reviewer of the new Oxford "authoritative text" of Hume's works on religion has been caught napping (August 12). If J. M. Cameron would check it against the readily available microfilms of the original manuscript, he will find it is less faithful to Hume's wording in the *Dialogues* than previous editions, and typographically is an inconsistent hybrid of manuscript and printing conventions. The textual apparatus, which is the main novelty of the new edition, contains many errors of transcription, sometimes confuses the order of composition, and has at least thirty entries in which the stuff and finish of purportedly inter-changeable expressions have been misaligned.

M. A. STEWART.
Philosophy Department, University of Lancaster.

In interrogative mood

By Daniel Weissbein

PABLO NERUDA :
Libro de las Preguntas
154pp. Barcelona : Seix Barral.
180 pesetas.

Nowhere is Pablo Neruda's customary omission of the initial Spanish question-mark more in evidence than in this posthumous volume of verse. *Libro de las preguntas* is a collection of some 300 interrogative couplets presented in groups of four or five, with an occasional question of a single line. Despite the nine-syllable lines that Neruda writes in, it is with some trepidation that one calls this a book of poems, as the couplets do not always seek to attain that tension between form and content and the economy of expression that one still expects from (good) poetry. But a great many of Neruda's utterances, even if prosaic, are full of the same charm, humour and inventiveness that he displays elsewhere and which are among his most valuable gifts.

It would be interesting to know whether we should not read *cerveza* instead of *cereza* in the lines

No crees que vive la muerte
dentro del sol de una cereza ?

This would not only make them pleasanter and more meaningful lines in the general context of the book, faintly echoing La Rochefoucauld's famous dictum "Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement" and alluding explicitly to the problematic nature of truth; it would also give away the reason for Neruda's questioning mood: to apprehend life all the better.

Yet if the metaphysics of death and life suffuse *Libro de las preguntas*, they do so, as one would expect, through very vivid, concrete and simple images of living or moving things, from aeroplanes and turtles to birds and voluptuous crocodiles found only in Australia. The book's title is itself reminiscent of those of a long list of such fourteenth and fifteenth-century treatises as *Libro de los exenplos*, *Libro de los engaños*, *Libro de las tribulaciones*, even *Libro de los gatos*, all of which would partially fit this volume.

And there is much that is medievally inspired in Neruda's collection, from his echoing of Villon's "Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?" in

Dónde están los nombres aquellos
dulces como tortas de antaño?

(with, its — involuntary? — Lévi-Straussian connotation ; and a clue no doubt, to Neruda's title), to the one affirmative statement to be found among all these questions :

Es mala vivir sin infierno :
No podemos reconstruirlo?
Y colocar el triste Nixon
con el traste sobre el brasero?

Modern, more explicit literary echoes ring at times less true Neruda's (debased) version of Rimbaud's *Voyelles*, for instance pirouettes to incorporate the following :

Cuando escribió su libro azul
Rubén Darío no era verde?
No era escarlata Rimbaud,
Góngora de color violeta?
Y Victor Hugo tricolor ?
Y yo a listones amarillos?

Neruda has put himself in good company, and later mockingly confirms this view of himself as a classic, through parody and commentary of his own notorious line from his first book *Crepusculario* (1919)—"Desde el fondo de tí, tí, y arrodillado/ un niño triste, como yo, nos mira"—by asking

Dónde está el niño que yo fui
sigue adentro de mí o se fue ?
Sabe que no lo quise nunca
y que tampoco me quería ?

Despite the humour and the light-heartedness, there is something both saddening and moving in this posthumous collection. It comes from the contrast between our constant awareness of Neruda's previous vast output—a corpus of verse that seems to fill an imaginary dimension of literary space beyond the printed words of this book and to give them a depth that they would otherwise lack—and what we actually see on the page. One couplet implies them all:

A quién le puedo preguntar, que
vine a hacer en este mundo ?

Walking towards Constantinople

By Alastair Forbes

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR :
A Time of Gifts
291pp. John Murray. £6.50.

From the very beginning of Patrick Leigh Fermor's genial contribution to these pages ("The Art of Nonsense" *TLS* January 28, 1977) to its marvellously memorable last few hundred words evoking, in the fashion of some articulate Anna-Livia-Plurabelle-lettres, his recollections of George Seferis and Maurice Bowra, treading sunset-reddened-current (Corinthian) water "with just enough exertion to keep their animated busts afloat", the reader's pleasure was tinged by regret that this rarest of British authors should write so seldom. It is true that quite early in his career he managed in *The Violins of St Jacques* an artistic masterpiece sufficient for longer than a lifetime's reputation, a romantic novella that cannot fail to please those who in succeeding generations have the luck to rediscover it and which has not surprisingly inspired from the present Master of the Queen's Music an agreeable opera of considerable merit ; and that both these stemmed from his own journeys in the Caribbean, so beautifully and idiosyncratically described in *The Traveller's Tree*, a worthy Heinemann Foundation Prize winner.

This most torrentially talkative of men ("Very good-looking but too pedantically loquacious" was how Chips Channon had described him after finding him as a fellow guest at the Sacheverell Sitwells) was also once wont to take regular retreats in the Normandy monastery of St Wandrille, like an alcoholic on a dry-out, and from these there emerged his delightful *A Time to Keep Silence*. His two excellent books of Greek travel, appearing with a ten-year interval, *Mani* and *Roumeli*, gained considerable popularity perhaps less for their somewhat esoteric subject matter than for their felicitous style, both providing some choice convolutions of at times almost autointoxicated descriptive language. (I am grateful to Christopher Booker for the information that *Mani*'s "two-page incantation of all the various strange communities within Greece . . . prompts Leigh Fermor into the longest sentence in English literature". *Mani* won the Duff Cooper Award for its author to whom the late Princess Margita, in presenting it, apologized for a demotic Greek less fluent than his own.)

Five books, even from a man who from his teens onward had plumped for a writer's life, should provide courses enough for a decent literary table d'hôte. But when not keeping open house as an expatriate squireen in the *dulce* pleasure *domum* he has decreed for his wife and himself at Kardamyli in the southern Peloponnesus, the now sexagenarian author makes astounding sorties as far as the Higher Andes or the Middle Himalayas and is seldom to be seen in London on the short commuting stroll from John Murray's to Whites and back. ("Infarctus days with knobs on" was how he described to me the more dashing winter mountain expeditions on a recent character-istically close-crammed postcard picturing on its obverse the Mall Road at Simla under snow, looking just as his pepper-and-salt-Norfolk-jacketed and G.B.S.-knickerbockered ICS geologist-sahib father must have known it, awfully reminiscent of Sir Arnold Lunn's Anglo-Swiss Alpine resorts where he would scramble with his son on leave from surveying for the Government of India.) I treasure my recollection of his appearance last year at the funeral of Patrick Kinross, whose coffin was borne out of the pretty restored church on Mrs Siddons' patch of Paddington Green followed by, as first and foremost mourner, the solemn Muslim figure of the Turkish ambassador, just ahead of the doddery High Anglican Driberg, once and only Lord Bradwell, correctly prophesying from the corner of a drooly mouth : "I'll be the next to go, I'm afraid." Shortly before that, the congregation had listened agape to Paddy, himself a recent victor in an arduous skirmish on the side of his resilient anti-bodies, reading out a Second Lesson of his own selection, a quasi-surrealist extract from an Apocryphal Gospel of St James-the-Less, whose opening words must first have caught his alert and fanciful eye : "Now I, Joseph, was walking."

"Book in offing at last", that springtime postcard of the wooden façade of the Patiala State Bank's Simla branch had announced, and here indeed it is and very well worth waiting for it has turned out to be. Louis MacNeice's lines :

For now the time of gifts is gone—
O boys that grow, O snows that melt
have provided its title, but "Now I, Paddy, was walking" might have done just as well ; for what the book offers (it ends tantalizingly, his "future so full of promised marvels", with the author pausing in the middle of an iron bridge separating the little Czechoslovakian town of Parkan from the Hungarian frontier post across the Danube at Erzegom) is the first part of his fascinating footslog towards "the levitating skylines of Constantinople, pricking its sheaves of thin cylinders and its hemispheres out of the sea mist" that beckoned to him from the pages of Robert Byron, whose companion in Macedonian travels, Mark Ogilvie Grant, had actually lent him the faded Bergen rucksack, containing a few dry warm clothes, an *Oxford Book of English Verse* and a Loeb *Horace* Volume 1, that constituted his only baggage.

In his handsome head however, he carried more considerable and variegated *gepäck*, providing him with plenty, in the Maurice Baring sense, to declare. After a blissful early childhood with free and easy foster-parents on a Northampton-shire farm, "marvellously lawless years" that had "unfitted me for the faintest shadow of constraint", he soon fell foul of almost every form of educational establishment save a dotish Suffolk one for sundry misfits of both sexes from four to twenty years old, where maddeningly been able to con-teachers and pupils together did Dalcroze without clothes and some pretty unsquare square dancing before this Thelema's enforced dissolution. There followed a brief purgatory in exile "among the snake-belts and the bat-oil of a horrible preparatory school", then a happy and fruitful spell of learning at a civilized (Wykehamist) Common Entrance crammers before securing admission to King's School, Canterbury, where he "wrote and read with intensity, sang, debated, drew and painted, scored minor successes . . . imitative and bad verse poured out like ectoplasm", and indulged in "erratic behaviour which was construed, perhaps rightly, as showing off: 'anything for a laugh' was the usual term for this"; a third-year and penultimate house report dubbed him "a dangerous mixture of sophistication and recklessness".

A somewhat foolhardily pressed *schwärm* for Nellie, the pretty pre-Raphaelite daughter of a Canterbury greengrocer more than seven years his senior, soon got him the sack, hardly concealed when it came to soliciting and securing "a corking good letter of recommendation" for Sandhurst, his destination if further cramming were to prove successful. Lawrence Goodman took him to every Shakespeare play going and set him on a leaping and bounding progress through Latin, Greek, English and history. In a year, he "read more books than I ever crammed into a similar stretch of time".

His mother (his parents were by then separated by more than the long Posh journey East of Suez) had been "marvellously gifted in the exacting skill of reading aloud". "Learning by heart was never irksome. A private anthology, both of those automatically absorbed and of poems consciously chosen and memorized as though one were stocking up for a desert island" became a rich cargo-list of lines in Latin and French as well as his own language. When, years later in Nazi-occupied Crete, he had captured and kidnapped General Kreipe, and the German, viewing dawn break over Mount Ida, had murmured to himself, "Vides ut alta stet nive candidum/ Soracte . . .", his captor had madeningly been able to con-tinue: "nec jam sustineant onus/ silvae laborantes, geluque/Flumina constiterint acuto", and so on for five stanzas, to be rewarded, after a long silence, by an "Ach so, Herr Major ".)

Yet of his formidable *vade mecum* treasury, all the author modestly has to say is that "it is a mixture of rather dog-eared romanticism with heroics and rough stuff, with traces of religious mania". Thank goodness for his taste for romanticism and heroics, for on this trip we want no Coleridge with his "I believe I should walk over the plain of Marathon without taking more interest in it than in any other plain of similar features", nor even a Bing Crosby with his "I am supposed to walk and it is less boring if you have a golfball to hit". Our author prefers to move like Walter Scott, with his head frequently in a flying cloud of associations. Field Marshal Wavell once remarked that "repeating verse to others is seldom popular" (though he never had to be asked twice to recite, as I well recall). Paddy Leigh Fermor found that, while song caused no dismay, the murmuring of verse caused raised eyebrows and looks of anxious pity. As for the sword-thrust at the bridge-head that brings the great lord of Luna crashing among the augurs like an oak-tree on Mount Alvernus—here the shouts, the walking stick slashes, the staggering gait and the arms upflung should never be indulged in if there is anyone within miles, if then. To a stray eye, one is drunk or a lunatic." When caught out

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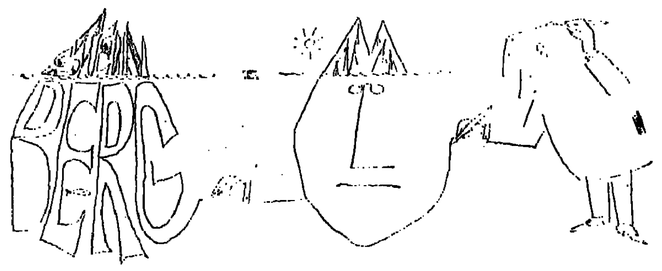
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Saul Steinberg's hidden depths : " A lot of Steinberg lies below the surface ", writes William Hewison in The Cartoon Connection *(144pp. Elm Tree Books. £5.50) ; Steinberg " does not permit examples of his work to appear in anthologies such as this one, so all I can offer is a parody ". Mr Hewison, art editor of* Punch *since 1960 and a cartoonist himself, explores the cartoonist's craft in a shrewd and informal commentary on both content and technique, with the emphasis on the last thirty years ; but if you want to look only at the cartoons, " well that's all right by me ". Though Steinberg,* The New Yorker's *" intellectual juggler of symbols ", is not represented, there are examples of the work of more than eighty other artists, from Britain, America, Europe and Australia (which " produces more cartoonists per acre than any other country ").*



there, he would " reduce all gestures to a ' feint at hair-tidying ".

From the foregoing it will be seen that the author had been no ordinary army candidate before deciding that peacetime soldiering would never do for him. No wonder he graduated from rather earnest tutorials in Kensington Gardens' deckchairs to high-to-middling jinks as the dashing young cadet recruit to a slightly muzzy squad of pleasure-bent Mayfair musketeers, with a bedsitter base in the then still just half respectable Shepherd Market. But his funds were down to a pound a week (let it nevertheless not be forgotten that you could in those days get a brand new *and* reliable Ford car from Dagenham for just £100) and " gloom and despondency descended with the start of winter " in 1933. He had run up bills trying to keep up with the juvenile sartorial dandyism he had mistaken for worldly maturity. A " dubious popularity " had been won by his " genuine rashness, linked with a kind of clownish exhibitionism ", carried on one occasion as far as " diving into a lake at a ball, only remembering when climbing out covered in slime and duckweed that my tails were borrowed ". The Cavendish Hotel-Ritz Bar-Café Royal-Gargoyle circuit had become his rat-racing treadmill, until. . . .

About lamplighting time at the end of a wet November day . . . inspiration came. A plan unfolded with the speed and completeness of a Japanese paper flower in a tumbler. To change scenery : absudon London and England and set out across Europe like a pilgrim, or a palmer, or a errant scholar. . . . All of a sudden, this was the only thing to do. I would travel on foot . . . jogging along on fifty pounds a year like Lord Durham with a few noughts knocked off. . . . A new life! Freedom! Something to write about !

A windfall loan of £15 made possible the acquisition of an old army greatcoat, sweaters, shirts, nailed boots and the like from Millett's surplus stores, already in existence apparently in the Strand, and the retention of a tidy capital sum in change from such an outlay. Four crisp new pound notes were to be mailed to him Poste Restante every four weeks, the first managing to coincide in the nick of time with his arrival at Munich's main postamt; only to be stolen a few hours later by a pimply youth in a neighbouring Youth Hostel bed, along with the passport into which they had been slipped and his entire backpack, including well-filled diary and well-thumbed Horace, none of it ever to be recovered. HM Consul-General gave him a new passport and lent him a fiver.

But long before he has reached Bavaria with its Slav-seeming onion domes and its landscapes—like so many others the laugh and breadth of Germany—instantly recognizable from the illustrations in nursery editions of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales, with its gabled half-timbered houses turning to gingerbread in the dusk; its enormous Dürer-like fauna pausing on frozen fields with ears pricked at the sound of distant woodcutters' saws, and its " hoodoo children returning from school with hairy satchels and muffled ears ", the author has inspired us with complete confidence in him as companion and friend as well as truthful historian of his travel. Nor is it only because he has waited forty years to set down on paper in so fresh a fashion his youth, as Goethe did at the same age in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, that we seem to become aware of something strongly in common between the two writers, despite their differences in so much else. " Abroad at last, far from my familiar habitat and separated by the sea from the tangles of the past " (he had even elected to adopt his middle Christian name of Michael to emphasize this escape), the teenage English boy seems to have tumbled early to Goethe's truth : " Der Zweck des Lebens ist das Leben selbst ". Life's aim is life itself. And, Goethe-like, too, " wie wahr, wie seiend " all the life he observed now seem to him, feeling himself as Goethe before him " transformed to the innermost marrow " by this discovery.

He was enchanted to find how very much alive too was " the old tradition in Germany of benevolence to the wandering young ", and " by the kindness and hospitality that was to occur again and again on these travels ", enabling him to lie snug " beneath an eiderdown like a giant meringue " as often as he had to sleep rough. Tongue-tied as he crossed Holland, the remnants of what he had picked up of German during winter-sports holidays in the Bernese Oberland soon came to the rescue of this natural linguist, and he found it easy to make friends and master the second person singular after drinking. *Brüderschaft*. Oddly enough, at the outset of his voyage, he did not know a line of Goethe and did not catch on when, after entering " with freezing cheeks and hair caked in snow " the welcoming warmth of the Red Ox in Heidelberg, he was addressed by a smiling older lady who had noticed his stick, rucksack and the widening puddle beneath him with a " Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind ? "; though within a couple of months he was quite accustomed to turn over the pages at candlelit Bösendorfers in many a Bavarian or Austrian house for pianists and singers of Schubert's *Erlkönig* (he never heard Schumann's).

Frau Spengel and her husband and son immediately made him their guest and friend, so that he " often thought of this kind and civilised family even in the obliterating moods of war ". The university was not in residence but young Fritz Spengel, who was to be killed at Trondheim in Norway in 1940, answered all his eager questions about student life. From his characterization of the Student League of Saxo-Borussia (" Its members Prussia and Saxony's haughtiest ") as " Heidelberg's Bullingdon ", he goes on to elaborate on its sabre duelling as " tribal scarification. Those dashing scars were school ties that could never be taken off " ; but he is wrong in stating that Hitler was to succeed in suppressing all this, for nearly two years later I spent a disagreeably beery and bloody early morning in Bonn watching these very rites being practised.

Hitler, yes. On his first day in Germany he had heard a woman say, as she stared back at the Führer's eyes in a framed photograph : " Ein sehr schöner Mann. " But in Cologne a few days later his landlady, a widow who spoke warmly of the British colonel who had been billeted on her for several years as " ein gentleman durch und durch ", whose " angelic " soldier servant had even married a local girl, told him she could not bear the Reichskanzler : " So ein gemeines gesicht ! ". In a Rhenish workmen's bar late one night he found a contemporary off the night-shift and accepted the offer of hospitality in a room which " turned out to be a shrine of Hitleriana ", SA uniforms, pistol, the lot . . .

When I said it must be rather claustrophobic with all that stuff, he laughed and said : " *Mensch !* You should have seen it last year ! Then it was all red flags, stars, hammers and sickles, pictures of Lenin and Stalin and Workers of the World Unite. I wasn't only a *Sozi*, but a *Kommi, ein echter Bolschewik*. We used to beat the hell out of the Nazis, and they beat the hell out of us. *Man hat sich totgeleucht*. Then, suddenly, when Hitler came into power, I realised Adolf was the man for me.

His mates had changed too. " All those chaps in the bar, every single one. They are all in the SA now. I was astonished how easily they all changed sides." What, asked the author, did his parents think ? " *Mensch !* They don't understand anything. Old fashioned."

But it is not for the description of the Europe that the totalitarians made that this book needs to be read but for its extraordinary picture of the Europe they succeeded in destroying. In the eighteenth-century baroque Schloss Bruchsal, formerly the palace of the Prince-Bishops of Speyer (which the author tiresomely writes Spires, as it has hardly been spelt since the great Diet of 1529) where he found P. G. Wodehouse's *Leave it to Psmith* amongst the Tauchnitz editions by his bedside, he learnt from the Waldstein-Sonata-playing Burgomaster that he was entitled to expect and even demand a free supper, beer, bed and breakfast for one night in every town or village in Germany, all on the parish. The very next night he was sitting on a rough bench at a guarded and grained board on which

> raw knuckles of enormous hands, half-clenched still from the grasp of ploughs and spades and bill-hooks, lay loose among the cut onions and the chipped pitchers and a brown loaf broken open. . . . A small crone in a pleated coif sat at the end of the table, her puzzled features flung into relief by a single wick in a bowl below.

Painted sacredly by somebody, murdered the author, but by whom ? Le Nain, perhaps, or La Tour, as not a German at all. He slept on a bed of sliced hay, still wrapped in his greatcoat, and pottered to cloddhoppered. " The compost smell of snow, wood, dust, cobwebs, marigolds, beetroots, fodder, cattle cake and the cow's breath was laced with an ammoniac tang from the plip-plop and the splash that sometimes broke the rhythm of the mooing and the click of horns. This was more like it ! "

It was after Munich, where the Olympic beerswilling bout in the Isarsspund or *Schwemme* at the Hofbräuhaus calls forth a loathing literary tour de force, that he first began to taste interleaved *la vie de chateau* in between poor houses and youth hostels. He stayed five whole days with the Baltic Baron von Liphardt-Katshof who miraculously kitted him out after his robbery, and after presenting him, *en très grand seigneur* with a small duodecimo seventeenth-century Horace bound in bright green leather and suitably inscribed wrote to friendly nobility and gentry along the trail as to the author was able to move " straight from straw to straw " from poster and then back again ". The only book he had managed to save from the rucksack theft was a pocket *Hamlet* in Schlegel and Tieck's translation, and he further improved his German by recitation from this on the road.

Leigh Fermor is the master of the set-piece parenthesis and there are plenty of those in this book. In Ulm, whose " flat gables lifted their gills along enormous roofs ", he saw from the tallest spire in Europe visions going back centuries of the battle fought around it, where others would only have remembered Austria's " armer ungliicklicher Mack " creeping in to Kutusov's headquarters after his defeat by Napoleon. In nearby Augsburg he fills his diary with a lovely discussion about the Landsknechts with their slashed sleeves, " the beards guzzler in his harlequin knee-dustiery, recruited in Swabia ", the figure on the court cards, ever tracing an old French game called *Landesquet*. Although he misspells Nuremberg one feels he is aware of and would agree with the fifteenth-century Italian who wrote that " In truth, the Kings of Scotland would gladly be housed as luxuriously as the ordinary citizen of Nuremberg " ; a familiar thought to anyone who knows the charmingly illustrated Stüdebuch of the city's shoemaker and poet Hans Sachs.

Across the Austrian border he had to hurry through Salzburg in order to resist the temptations of the pervading and enticing smell of ski wax (one that has almost disappeared in today's plastic age from all except expert *langlauf* circles). The great baroque abbey of St Florian provokes from him a splendid essay on German painting " splending, as it were, on a Verdor Weydon-Mantegna axis ", for the " convincing earthiness " of its backgrounds in much of the religious painting, he notices that " angels, unlike their soaring ancestors in Italy, failed to maintain my interest and admiration. Thirty pages from the end the author arrives at the hunting lodge of the Jewish-Austrian Baron Schey, now also dead, then only fifty-two years old, to find the baron three-quarters of the way through *Le Temps Retrouvé* and wondering what he will do when he has finished it. The author felt braced and as if safely through some important barrier when the baron told him to stop calling him " Sir ". He found his host exerting upon him " an emancipating and debarbarizing influence. . . . My journey had taken on a new dimension and all prospects glowed."

A Time of Gifts is such a marvellous book that we surely have the right to ask that its concluding pendant volume should not be delayed. Though it has given me as much pleasure as anything of the kind since Goethe's *Italian Journey*, it probably belongs on my bookshelf nearer to Borrow, of whom a Frenchman once said that he possessed the individualism which redeems the psychological passiveness of Englishmen in general. Like Borrow, Leigh Fermor employs literary artifice, but always without the slightest hint of literary insincerity. It is a joy to find a British writer once more making such good and full use of the matchless richness of his own language, even when it occasionally leads him too far down Fleckeriish culs-de-sac. All in all Mr Leigh Fermor writes wonderfully well, not just " the proper words in proper places " enjoined for good prose but even on occasion those " best words in best places " that proclaim the poet. British and European examination boards should seriously consider whether future students should not turn to him from those other inland voyages, by canoe or donkey, of the soberer, duller Stevenson.

The English cliché forgets that what Horace actually wrote was " Indignor quandoque *bonus* dormitat Homerus ", and when an author as good as Leigh Fermor writes " serpent-haunted " a dozen words away from " saxophone-haunted ", one's eye and ear are alike disagreeably shocked and surprised. The enchanting Anny Ondra, who incidentally became the wife of Max Schmeling, is misspelt Ondera. Cuckoo clocks come not from Switzerland chiefly but almost exclusively from the Black Forest. Biedermeier should never be written Biedermayer, like Metro-Goldwyn or Rumpelmayer. But otherwise the book is produced, index and all, almost as faultlessly as it is written.

" One must let one's pen trot as it will ", wrote Madame de Sévigné, adding that " la mienne a toujours la bride sur le cou." Not everybody perhaps will admire the Lippizaner-like literary feats of *dressage* and *haute école* performed by Mr Leigh Fermor's in his baroque *manège*. But an explanation may here be in order. For the most extraordinary aspect of all is that he writes really very much as he talks, which is with unfailing flourish, inspiration and enthusiasm, making him a man, as well as an author, in a million.

Breaking new ice

By Alfred Stephenson

DAVID THOMSON :
Scott's Men
330pp. Allen Lane. £5.95.

In David Thomson's words " this is a story of confused leadership that has often been overlooked. Scott does not strike me as a great man, at least not until the end ". Scott's character was a complex one indeed and to understand it fully one has to consider the social attitudes current in the era in which he was working. His first command was virtually thrust upon him by Sir Clements Markham, a diehard follower of the naval tradition in polar exploration and one who does not escape the author's criticism. In the period between his two expeditions Scott had to contend with serious domestic problems following the death of his father, the embarrassing situation created by Shackleton's successful expedition and the struggle to convince himself that he was worthy to marry Kathleen Bruce. In *Scott's Men* the author stresses the great difficulty Scott had in coming to decisions during this period, the last of which was to decide whether or not to go south and if so for what purpose. Finally when he did get there he had to decide what to do about Amundsen. As a result the author builds up a picture of a very sensitive man, bound by duty to his Service but not really the ideal leader and organizer of a large expedition.

There is plenty of scope for character studies of the chief personalities involved and for some unusual philosophical conclusions, at times difficult to follow, on the author's part. Use is made of information from personal diaries and some hitherto unpublished, rather bitter evaluations of certain personalities are included. It should be noted that Mr Thomson has not been to the Antarctic and does not accept all the reasons for going there. He considers the Endurance Expedition " blatantly heroic and senseless " and the scientific results of the Terra Nova Expedition to have served no other purpose than to fill several feet of library shelves.

The majority of the author's conclusions appear to be well reasoned ; the reader will have to make his own assessment of this new and debatable way in which the traditional picture of both Scott and Antarctic exploration is painted.

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prepared by the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies
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Peasants for Hitler

By Jeremy Noakes

DIETER GESSNER :
Agrarverbände in der Weimarer Republik
304pp. Düsseldorf : Droste. DM48.

Agrardepression, Agrarideologie und Konservative Politik in der Weimarer Republik
53pp. Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner. DM6.20.

J. E. FARQUHARSON :
The Plough and the Swastika
The NSDAP and Agriculture in Germany 1928-1945
312pp. Sage Publications. £8 (paperback, £4).

The difficulties of adjustment posed for agriculture in an industrializing society are invariably acute. Nowhere has this been more evident than in Germany; the problems of agriculture have played a central and fateful role in modern German history and notably in the fall of the Weimar Republic. For it was the support of the Protestant rural community which gave the Nazis most of their votes, while the role of the Landbund in the fall of the Brüning and Schleicher governments helped to undermine the last remaining barriers to the appointment of Hitler.

Surprisingly, however, the history of agriculture in the Weimar Republic has hitherto been relatively neglected. While recent historians of Weimar have descended on industrial archives in droves, unravelling the complicated network of pressure groups and cartels, defining the political strategies of the various sectors of industry, and endeavouring to prove or disprove the decisive role of industry in the fall of the republic, the arguably more important role of agriculture has been to some extent overlooked. It is true of course that the part of the Landbund in the fall of the Brüning and Schleicher governments has been elucidated and the Nazi campaign among the peasantry has been analysed. Yet our understanding of these events has been limited by a lack of knowledge of developments within the agricultural organizations during the previous years. For the electoral successes of the Nazis and the capture of agriculture by the "national opposition" before 1933 may have owed as much to a crisis among the traditional representatives of agriculture as to Nazi propaganda activities. Hitherto we have lacked a full analysis of this crisis. This gap has now been filled by Dieter Gessner's important study of agricultural pressure groups in the Weimar Republic. *Agrarverbände in der Weimarer Republik* not only illuminates the divisions within agriculture, divisions which the Nazis were to exploit to the full, it also contributed important new insights into the formation of the Brüning government and its failure to secure a stable basis of support.

The years 1918-1933 were a period of mixed fortunes for German agriculture. The revolution of 1918 had failed to dislodge the Prussian Junker landowners of east Elbia from their estates. Yet, as a result of that political revolution, they had suffered a loss of political and economic influence greater than that of any other section of the pre-1918 establishment. In place of their privileged pre-war position both they, and indeed the agricultural interest in general, entered the arena of a pluralist and democratic political system and were now forced to face the reality of their minority position within parliament and their relative weakness in comparison with industrial and urban pressure groups. While the army, industry, and the civil service all retained their influence more or less intact, it took agriculture a decade to regain a decisive role in German politics.

Yet having done so, it asserted its influence with a vengeance. The main question at issue for German agriculture after 1918 was how it could best assert its interests within the new context of Weimar democracy. Two alternative strategies emerged: one course of action involved operating within the framework of the Weimar constitution through the normal channels of pressure group and parliamentary activity and through participation in government; this required a willingness to compromise with industrial and consumer interests. The alternative was a policy of uncompromising refusal to cooperate with the Weimar political system and a demagogic campaign comprising attacks on democracy and extreme demands in favour of agriculture.

By 1928 it appeared as if the first strategy had triumphed. Not only was it supported by the Bauernverein, representing the bulk of the Catholic peasantry in west and south Germany, but even the Landbund, which combined the Junkers of east Elbia and the bulk of the Protestant peasantry of north and central Germany, was committed to it. Indeed, the agricultural organizations had joined together in the so-called "Green Front" to coordinate their pressure group activities and their success was considerable. The concessions made by the governments of Marx and Müller in terms of tariffs, state monopolies, and subsidies were substantial and the continuity in agricultural policy between 1927 and the end of 1933, from Marx to Hitler, is noteworthy. In a lecture to the Institut für Europäische Geschichte in Mainz in January 1976, which is now being published by Franz Steiner, Dr Gessner posed the question of why governments in the latter part of Weimar proved so accommodating to agrarian pressure. As he shows, even the SPD had accepted the case for special assistance to agriculture to a remarkable degree. He concludes that the experience of the blockade of 1914-1918, together with the prevalent romantic and corporatist notions of the crucial importance of the land and the agrarian community for the nation and its economy, helped to reinforce the stress on the significance of the domestic market—and therefore of a healthy agrarian sector—which was to grow with the collapse of international trade.

The problem was that the agricultural crisis which began in 1928 raised the political temperature. Increasingly, discontent demanded more and more drastic remedies. Yet there were limits to the extent to which coalition governments could satisfy agriculture at the expense of export industry and the consumers, and the compromises imposed by these limits were exploited by the opponents of Weimar democracy. In part, Brüning's appointment represented an attempt by Hindenburg to overcome these limits. It was also an aspect of Schleicher's strategy to exploit the political mobilization of the agricultural community in order to provide a mass basis for the new conservative version of the republic which he envisaged. Thus it was no accident that the new minister of agriculture in Brüning's cabinet was the leader of the Landbund, and Braitscheid aptly reformulated the description of the Brüning government as a "cabinet of front line veterans" into a "cabinet of Green Front veterans".

Yet Brüning and the leaders of the agrarian organizations involved in the Green Front had underestimated the extent of the radicalization of the rural population and failed to allow for the unwillingness of the bulk of the Junkers to cooperate with even a more authoritarian version of the Weimar Republic and their determination to utilize mass agrarian discontent to destroy the republic and reassert their political predominance.

The intransigence of Hugenberg and his Junker supporters shattered the unity of the Green Front leadership and made the Landbund unreliable as a Nazi takeover, while the rank-and-file members of the agrarian organizations were seeking their salvation in the promise of a Third Reich in which the peasantry would be the first estate of the nation.

Gessner's book provides a new perspective on the divisions within the German right which helped to prevent the formation of a viable conservative regime and enabled the Nazis to ally themselves with elements of the old establishment and so come to power. These divisions were rooted in differing economic interests, notably between agriculture and industry or a section of it, but were also based on a different assessment of the kind of political framework that was appropriate to these interests. Those willing to work with the system, or a modified form of it, and thus determined to overthrow parliamentary democracy altogether. In short, the author makes a valuable contribution to the key question of the relationship between the "Vernünftrepublikaner" and the Ultras in Weimar Germany.

With the Nazi takeover agriculture believed that it had come into its own, and it had good grounds for this view. Hitler was aware of the extent to which he owed his success to the support of the rural population and was influenced by the economic views current among the German right about the primacy of economic importance of agriculture. In any case, in the first phase of his regime he was obliged to "put up with Hugenberg as economic supremo". Combining in his person the ministries of economics and agriculture, Hugenberg was determined to give priority to agriculture. Moreover, the new regime had the ability to push through a programme favourable to agriculture which had previously been restricted by the opposition of industrial and consumer interests. Thus, for a time, agriculture was given preferential treatment—prices were fixed at higher levels, interest rates reduced, tariff protection increased, and free closures forbidden.

Given the nature of Hitler's goals, however, this situation could not continue for long. Fear of inflation and concern for the morale of the labour force soon prompted the regime to hold agricultural prices down while costs increased. The attempt to carry out a programme of rapid rearmament, while maintaining the production of consumer goods at normal levels, created a labour shortage leading to high wages in those industries involved in the rearmament boom and attracting workers away from the land.

Although in the idealized world of propaganda the peasantry were still eulogized as the backbone of the nation, the reality was very different; by the outbreak of war, their problems were comparable in extent to those they were facing when Hitler came to power, though different in character.

The broad trends in the development of agriculture during the Third Reich have already emerged from previous work on the Nazi economy. There has, however, been no study specifically devoted to agriculture. J. E. Farquharson's *The Plough and the Swastika* will not be the definitive account, but it does provide a useful analysis of the subject. The author provides new material on a number of aspects—the effects of the Entail Farm Law, the structure and operations of the Reich Food Estate, the Settlement Policy. He also brings out clearly the anachronistic nature of Nazi agricultural goals and the futility of their attempt to reverse the course of German economic development. Some of his judgments, however, appear superficial. For example the statement that "Hitler's pre-1928 orientation towards the cities seems in retrospect to have been a clear failure of judgment" ignores the fact that the crisis in the countryside did not really become manifest until the end of 1927. Similarly, his account of the resignation of Hugenberg is confusing and unconvincing. Above all, the author fails to provide an effective analytical framework. As a result, one does not get a very clear idea of the place of agriculture within the economic and political systems of the Third Reich. Nevertheless, despite these qualifications, Dr Farquharson's book is certainly a worthwhile contribution to Nazi studies.

In the summer of 1928 German diplomacy continued to concentrate on the related questions of reparations, disarmament and the evacuation of the Rhineland, and one half the documents presented in *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*, Series B, Volume 9, May 1-August 30, 1928 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, DM 47) have to do with one or other of these concerns. Events did nothing to assuage growing German impatience with lack of progress. While the spring elections in Germany had strengthened the republican parties, and therefore Stresemann's hand, those in France had weakened Briand's position.

The eye at the centre of things

By Roger Little

HENRIETTE LEVILLAIN :
Le Rituel poétique de Saint-John Perse
346pp. Paris : Gallimard. 11fr.

YVES-ALAIN FAVRE :
Saint-John Perse
Le langage et le sacré
120pp. Paris : José Corti. 35fr.

EVELINE CADUC :
Saint-John Perse
Connaissance et création
154pp. Paris : José Corti. 40fr.

JACQUES ROBICHEZ :
Sur Saint-John Perse : Eloges, La Gloire des Rois, Anabase
180pp. Paris : CDU et SEDES réunis. 32.50fr.

FRANCIS PRUNER :
L'ésotérisme de Saint-John Perse (dans Anabase)
93pp. Paris : Klincksieck. 36fr.

PIERRE GUERRE and JEAN-LOUIS LALANNE :
Les oiseaux et l'oeuvre de Saint-John Perse
142pp with 16 colour plates. Aix-en-Provence : Fondation Saint-John Perse. 30fr.

In the past twelve months, eight books have been published in France on the poetry of Saint-John Perse, almost doubling the number which had appeared there before. By any account, this is an extraordinary phenomenon. What other country has ever, in so short a time, done so much for one of its poets, however popular or important? What guilty consciences or spurious motives must be at work, we ask ourselves, if, with George Steiner, we consider Perse's poetry overrated? Or, if we take the view that Perse is still an under-read master, why has it taken so long for poetic justice to be done?

Extraneous forces are undoubtedly at work, though not necessarily to Perse's dishonour. As the first living poet to appear in Gallimard's prestigious "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade", in 1972, he there provided a corpus appropriate for serious study, and so a basis for selection for the agrégation syllabus in the past academic year. In effect every trainee teacher and lecturer in France will then have studied Perse, and every French university will have had to discover or invent a member of its staff to teach him in some depth. More than one university was at panic stations, an unedifying if not unjustifying situation for those foreigners, notably in the United States and Great Britain, who have long recognized Perse's importance, spurred by the notable, though very different, contributions made by Archibald MacLeish and T. S. Eliot.

Is Saint-John Perse then only a scholar's or a poet's poet? If by this we mean that he has a sensitivity alive to texture and rhythm as well as to breadth and depth of imagery and meaning: yes. But which reader of poetry has not something of both scholar and poet in him, and which reader of Perse is not readily alerted by the poetry itself to both its textual magnificence and its textural polyvalency? Since the poet's death in 1975, thousands of admirers have been able to support the Fondation Saint-John Perse and attend its superbly presented exhibitions at Aix-en-Provence and Paris. Perse's poetic aristocracy is worlds apart from social snobbery: its appeal is restricted rather to an elite of the observant and magnanimous.

It is not solely because of Alexis Leger's pseudonym that there is some danger of hagiography and an established orthodoxy of views about him: there is, as Yves-Alain Favre is not the first to remark, an affinity between Perse's poetry and the great sacred texts. This involves not only a wealth of legitimate interpretations and a sense of revealed truth, firmly rooted in Perse's case in physical realities, but also a carefully woven and infinitely pleasurable pattern of sound and inflexion. The establishment of this highly wrought texture and Perse's refusal of any preordained orthodoxy are what most clearly distinguished his work from Claudel's, and these two factors are crucial in recognizing Perse's very individual voice. The other aspect that singles him out is the one most often noted: his celebration of the world and its ways, and his ennoblement of even the humblest tasks and objects which fulfil their potential.

The quest for self-fulfilment indeed guides Perse's mind through its own labyrinth, with the outside world as a constant foil and fund of imagery, to an ocumenical vision of physical and spiritual totality, the peaceable eye at the centre of violent natural forces. He is an accomplisher rather than an innovator, blending many traditions and seeming to be a pioneer more because some of those traditions had long been out of fashion than because of any intractable extremism or hollow belief in originality for its own sake.

He was also one of those daunting polymaths for whom discovery was delight, and whose degree in law and brilliant career at the French Foreign Office were matched by a precise knowledge and love of birds, *horses, stones, trees, stars, seas,* deserts, islands, East, West and men of every rank and speciality imaginable. Serious but never solemn, he was a brilliant and spellbinding raconteur and had a fund of wit which is too often overlooked in *his writings. But with so many* strings to his bow, and such generosity of spirit, Perse is likely to find his best critics among those prepared to be self-effacing.

Setting aside the superbly produced and splendidly documented exhibition catalogue *Les Oiseaux et l'oeuvre de Saint-John Perse*, whose aims are other, the best book of criticism, and the nearest to this ideal, is Henriette Levillain's *Le Rituel poétique de Saint-John Perse*. Well-judged and well-written, it takes a central interest of the poems —manifestations of ritual and initiation—and shows how this informs both Perse's craftsmanship and the processes of his thought. In *Saint-John Perse : le langage et le sacré*, Yves-Alain Favre takes a similar line, though he ranges less widely and is more schematic. He is less well informed than Mme Levillain, and in his discussion of technique fails to make certain crucial distinctions, as between metre and rhythm. But there are some rewarding pages towards the end of his book, when he discerns an interaction in Perse between writers, form and content, and rightly places him in Kant's category of the sublime rather than the beautiful. Eveline Caduc's book is even more schematic, and complete with reductive diagrams of each poem's structure; she even turns straight lines into pervasive spirals in a way not dreamt of in my geometry. All three books, however, contain subtle observations on Perse's formal enactment of his themes and on the transcendental in his work, recognizing that barriers of space and time are poetically transmuted into frontiers and that in this particular art has replaced religion in all but the broadest sense of the word.

All these three writers are self-confessed devotees of Perse and concentrate firmly on the poetry. The books by Jacques Robichez and Francis Pruner are different in that the first seems to have been written rather from a sense of duty and the second because of a passion for another religious mode: Taoism. *Sur Saint-John Perse* is essentially M Robichez's *agrégation* course, bringing a highly-trained intelligence to bear on a new subject and increasing in sympathy and understanding as it goes. M Pruner on the other hand carries a good idea much too far, explaining *Anabase* (wrly) by reference to esoteric elements of Taoism as if it were the only key, and Perse a cryptographer rather than a poet.

M Robichez's support of the view that *Anabase* is, on the contrary, an epic of the West Indies, shows how far some critics still are from accepting its universal, human qualities working simultaneously at geographical, psychological, ethical, poetic and spiritual levels.

Equally no critic seems to have analysed an important fact about *La Gloire des Rois*: the interplay between the cycle of poems as presented—one of Perse's finest, indeed, including the magnificent "Amitié du Prince" (which postdates *Anabase*)—and its composition, which covered nearly forty years. For two of the poems date from 1907, two from c 1921 and one from c 1945. The question of the homogeneity of the cycle against this background is not raised.

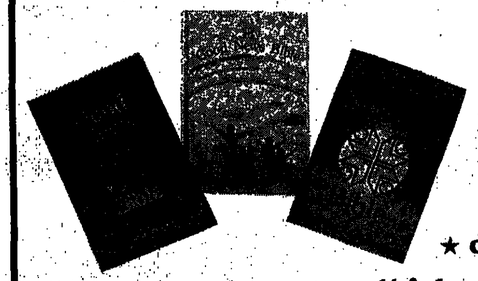
Such problems might more readily have been explored if French critics of Perse were better documented, notably in the much excellent work written in English on both sides of the Atlantic. Perse is now a long time more widely studied abroad than in France, and this is now leading to considerable repetition and often the tedious retelling of misconceptions.

There is a thesis to be written by a historian on *Alexis Leger the man before a full study of Saint-John Perse the poet can be made,* but there is also much spade-work to be done on his intellectual formation, on his correspondence and relations with his contemporaries, and of course on the poems themselves, which set new standards for the long poem, in defiance, as it were, of Poe's influential disbelief in the form. Perse is emerging now as one of the handful of truly great poets of this century, ranking in French with Valéry and Claudel but more universal than either. In an age of so many interesting and personable poets, his sustained mastery of vision and language makes him a giant, and his work, free of pettiness and fashionable cynicism, is a grandiloquent celebration of all that is best in man.

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The resurrected Proust

By J. M. Cocking

PHILIP KOLB (Editor):
Correspondance de Marcel Proust
Volume 3: 1902-03
526pp. Paris: Plon, 65fr.

At the beginning of 1902 Proust is still working at his translation of Ruskin's *Bible of Amiens* but with rather less enthusiasm and more sense of effort than in 1901. He adds a few character-sketches to the abortive *Jean Santeuil* and tells Antoine Bibesco in December 1902, just after contracting to produce a Ruskin anthology to meet the publisher Vallette's condition for accepting the *Bible d'Amiens*, that his translating and editing make unsatisfying work. He has been through a time of particularly bad health and low spirits, and now that he feels more alive his mind is full of ideas and characters demanding to be written into a novel. But *Jean Santeuil* makes no further progress and Proust's mother keeps his nose to the Ruskin grindstone.

What Proust calls his "resurrection" from illness and lassitude coincides with his new and numerous friendships with young aristocrats. These seem to have been without sexual relations but perhaps not, on Proust's side, without sexual overtones. If his relationship with Bibesco goes through phases that imply the general judgments about the unsatisfactory nature of friendship in *Le Temps retrouvé*, the relationship with "Blue-eyes" Fénelon as it is described and analysed in the letters to Bibesco goes through phases that seem to correspond rather to the later judgments about romantic love. In August 1902 Proust writes to Bibesco that he is bothered by his growing "affection" for Fénelon which is also, by a medical pun on the French word, a "complaint". Already Proust is lucid enough about his loves for a succession of friends and knows that absence is the surest treatment for what always tends to become a painful condition. Otherwise the "complaint" works itself out, says Proust, in a year or eighteen months, as it did with Lucien Daudet and Robert de Flers. Fénelon went to the French Embassy in Constantinople in December 1902, but not before the damage had been done. Proust later looked back at this particular relationship as one of his stormiest. The interesting thing is that the Proust of 1902 has much the same helpless understanding of his own emotional plights as the Marcel of *Le Temps retrouvé*.

As in the first two volumes of the correspondence the arrangement of these letters in chronological sequence adds a good deal to their interest. This third volume has a great number of hitherto unknown letters to Bibesco and brings a great many corrections to the texts and dates of letters already printed under Bibesco's editorship. Many of the new letters are trivial in content, yet seen together and in sequence they take the reader further into Proust's mind than any biographer could do. And connoisseurs of the quirks, oddities and gratuitous complexities that Proust's acquaintances summed up as "Proustification" will find plenty of amusement. Proust plays off the publisher and the review editor one against the other to hurry decisions about the appearance of the *Bible d'Amiens* in print; his tactics are successful, but he finds he has committed himself to a speed he cannot keep up in the preparation of the text. He writes to his friends making it quite clear what he wants of them, yet manages to withdraw from any responsibility for meeting what might be awkward requests. He contrives compliments so hyperbolic that they would be ludicrous without the self-deprecating self-consciousness of their own hyperbole that touches them with humour as well as wit. And he reveals sides of himself that he will later mock or satirize in the characters of his novel—a literary careerism as calculated as Bloch's, a cultivatedly excessive sensibility like Mme Verdurin's.

Sometimes what seems typically Proustian is provided not by Proust but by outside circumstance—though it is always Proust who provides the commentary. He apologizes to Mme Daudet for throwing her domestic staff into confusion by a telegraphed request for *bouillon à l'esprit de vin* when what he had written on the telegram was not "soup" but "hot water-bottle" (*bouillotte*). He relishes the farce of a telephone conversation in which Emmanuel Bibesco speaks to Léon Daudet who pretends to be one Marleton while thinking he is speaking to someone other than Emmanuel Bibesco; Emmanuel then asks Daudet to pretend to be Hermant, whereupon the real Hermant comes to the telephone, asks to speak to Proust and goes on talking to Emmanuel Bibesco thinking he is talking to Proust. And so on.

The serious, committed Proust comes through now and then. When Constantin de Brancovan asks him in public why he thinks he can translate Ruskin without knowing English Proust writes a long letter in self-defence and claims that if he does not know English he *does* know Ruskin. These letters show how much help he needed from his mother and his friends, and A. J. Roche in 1930 showed how faulty in some of the details the Ruskin translations remained; yet his claim that his work is faithful to the spirit of Ruskin is entirely justified. He writes a long letter to Georges de Lauris to protest against the latter's defence of Combes's anticlerical laws, and the neurotic fe many of the letters is sudde sipated as the full stre Proust's mind is brought to

Philip Kolb's editing is a able as ever, though perh skill is more heavily taxed particular collection of le which there are more pure sonal exchange and less re to contemporary events than first two volumes. In the there is a good deal of conje but the general sequen clear enough. At one Professor Kolb questions Painter's dating of the Good Friday motor trip t with Bibesco and others, ling Fénelon according to memoirs of Lauris and Bill ter gave Easter 1902. Kolb cludes it with a letter of 1903, but points out, as Painter that Fénelon was out of Fra that time. The 1903 letter, over, writes of a plan to Provins, not the right direct Laon. No doubt there were two such excursions, but the id logy remains hazy.

A few slips and misprints need correction in a future p but remarkably few they v view of the complexity of the rial task and the speed at w is proceeding.

Gide in decline

By Peter Fawcett

MARIA VAN RYSSELBERGHE:
Les cahiers de la Petite Dame
Volume 4: 1945-1951.
319pp. Paris: Gallimard.

As Gide lay half-conscious on his deathbed, Mme Théo leant over him and revealed that for thirty-three years she had kept a faithful account of his every word and deed. "Excellent, excellent", was his reaction once the news had sunk in. Thus he who distrusted biography, even autobiography, for its artificial patterning of past events, gave his seal of approval to the extraordinary endeavour which had become his companion's raison d'être, the only kind of biography capable of reflecting the doubts and hesitations which are the stuff of existence, one written *au jour le jour*.

This final volume of *Les Cahiers de la Petite Dame*, complete with an index to the whole series compiled by Dale F. G. McIntyre, takes us from shortly after the end of the Second World War until the death of their subject in his eighty-second year. Its long-running sagas are Gide's endless troubles with his amorously inclined secretary, Yvonne Davet, and the production of the farce taken from *Les Caves du Vatican* which was eventually performed at the Comédie Française in December, 1950.

Fascinating sidelights continue to be thrown on Malraux, whose effigy cast as a medal provokes Gide to comment, "ça n'est plus notre Malraux"; on Sartre whose thoughtful consideration is one of the consolations for two days of tiresome filming; and on Jean Amrouche whose schemes for self-promotion constantly required the adjunct of Gide's involvement, as in the ill-fated broadcast interviews of 1949.

Gide himself seems remarkably unchanged at the start of this period, still dominated in all things by his "immense curiosité de ce que cela pourrait donner" and leading an exceedingly active life for a man of his years. His lack of interest in questions other than aesthetic, religious or sexual is spelt out in conversation with Mme Théo and her son-in-law Pierre Herbart. In November 1947 the first heart-attack took place and the long decline set in. Gradually the profound originality, the sinuosity of his being turned into an irritating inability to make up his mind and he began to grow indifferent to what happened. The end when it came came quickly. At the beginning of 1951, having just opened her eighteenth notebook, Mme Théo, who was three years Gide's senior, asked herself: "Sera-ce le dernier? Qui désertera, l'autre?". After one point of view's last flirtation with a projected to Marrakesh, his life moved qu towards extinction on February 1951, before the rumpus w broke loose over the presence priest at his graveside three later.

As with all accounts of kind, there is a risk of infi which Mme Théo avoids to extent in these closing years deciding to "respecter mes and to write with "un cer recul". Her own occasional ques tions of the validity and effectiven of her enterprise add a perti extra dimension. All in all, can say of her notebooks, as does herself of the later v of Gide's *Journal*, that "c'est p de choses intéressantes, parfois a l'air de s'enliser dans du s puis on reprend vie et intér in the opinion of the pre reviewer at least, what she achie with increasing mastery as years: progress, is a genuine, unclassifiable, *oeuvre d'art*.

One minor quibble: given t size of the undertaking any was it really necessary, other for reasons of discretion, to omi parts of her narrative for pu tion elsewhere? Nevertheless these *Cahiers*, with the publica when complete, of Claude Mau *Maturité d'André Gide* and the still promised *Histoire de NRF de 1909 à 1914* by And Anglès — whose name an fortuitously in the opening of this volume—we begin to apart from a few gaps, at le picture of Gide's existence at one could wish or hope for, one that is surely unique in annals of literature.

What remains to be evaluat the present is the influence, cial or otherwise, of Mme Théo her circle on the central vol their attentions. Doubtless attitude was always characte by the affection and lack of *pris* of which Mme Théo ap but at times one feels that he too much cossetted against the fets of everyday life by their m ful protectiveness. The fact is after his installation in Vaneau", Gide wrote "no ma major work of fiction. Mme T herself admits that, though agre on most points of principle though careful not to interfere more than necessary, she and were diametrically opposed in modes of behaviour. Elisabeth Ryssel berghe points out the ster paradox whereby he who had proclaimed, "Familles je vous hais" should end his days rounded by a family as uncon donal but as close-knit as any the atmosphere of "le Vaneau entirely free of the "étouffem against which he rebelled so pas fully in his youth? Above all wonders, if things had been ent, perhaps harder, would the thirty years of his life have be more productive from a crea

Landscape with gnomes

By Malcolm Bowie

RENE CHAR:
Poems
Translated by Mary Ann Caws and Jonathan Griffin.
240pp. Princeton University Press. £11.30 (paperback, £3.80).

MARY ANN CAWS:
The Presence of René Char
360pp. Princeton University Press. £12.70.

For decades René Char has been an assiduous editor and anthologist of his own work. And he has collaborated so closely with his translators in the production of this bilingual *Poems* that the volume will take its place in the long sequence of self-presentations which includes *Poèmes et prose choisis* (1957), *La Parole en archipel* (1962) and *Commune présence* (1964). Poems which are as reliant as Char's upon the gnomic proposition as their basic building unit lend themselves easily to this sort of permutation: new cross-sections, new meanings. Although this procedure has sometimes seemed to be giving a thin imaginative yield, the new volume is sufficiently broad in its chronological spread (1927-74) and unusual in its emphases (the later work is especially well represented) to be worth acquiring even by those who read Char confidently in French.

The facing translations by Jonathan Griffin and Mary Ann Caws are generally successful. The single most difficult problem—that of timing the moments of collision or interpenetration between Char's physical and moral landscapes—has been solved with quiet ingenuity on numerous occasions. "Le Masque funèbre" (from *Les Matinaux*), for example, becomes:

> There was a man, once, who being no longer ever hungry, what with all the legacies he had devoured, food he had guzzled, neighbours he had impoverished, found his table bare, his bed deserted, his wife pregnant, and the soil bad in the field of his heart.
> Having no tomb and wanting to be alive, having nothing to give and less to receive, with objects shunning him, animals lying to him, he stole famine and made of it a dish that became his mirror and his own rout.

The guzzled food, the lying animals, the wanting to be alive which is at the same time a surreptitious wooing of death—each of these details is accurately weighted and placed within a system of dissonances remarkably close to that of the original. Char's is essentially a semantic rather than a syntactic imagination, and the translators faithfully reproduce both the plain sentence-structures which he favours and the coloured, compacted and improbable word-groups which those structures organize.

The translations will certainly do nothing—why should they?—to make things easy for the English-speaking newcomer to Char: he will still find himself staggering beneath the static, oracular weight of certain poems and unable to perceive nuances either of thought or of feeling beneath the cliche, untested affirmativeness of others. So much tenderness, compassionate energy and clear sight upon the natural world are to be discovered in this poet's world—but what a fight it can take, especially if one is approaching Char from the direction of post-war English verse, to dispel what may well be one's strongest first impression: that good ideas and generous impulses have been swamped and spoiled by a relentlessly sybilline diction.

The critical method and the prose-style adopted by Mary Ann Caws in her companion-volume *The Presence of René Char* may be gauged from these prefatory remarks:

> the approach of the book varies according to the stage of perception reached—by turns the points of reference in the text is phonetic or thematic, the method informally structural or impressionistic, analytic and centred on the particular, or more descriptive in its windings. The reading in its intermittent alterations of direction and its obstinate fidelity to the whole, is based on a prolonged immersion in the entirety of the published corpus. . . .

Her book is a series of to-and-fro scansions of Char's imaginative world, arranged under such headings as "Voice and Path", "Ways of the Word" and "Archipelago to Constellation". She is exceptionally skilled in tracing multiple meanings and homonymic undercurrents within single words or sentences; any one of her chapters would be useful to the new reader as a lesson in creative reading and in the ways the poems may animate and enrich one another when considered in thematic groups. But ten lengthy chapters each teaching the same lesson are surely too many—unless the reader is an unusually slow or recalcitrant learner.

The other unfortunate feature of this book is the critical prose-poetry to which the author often has recourse. Imagery, as we know, is one way of talking about imagery, and the method has had, in the work of Jean-Pierre Richard, for example, its striking successes. But Professor Caws, in common with a multitude of fellow-commentators, does not write well enough or independent-mindedly enough to create an illuminating tension between herself and her author. Imaginative assent unsupported and uncontrolled by a discriminating critical language has led to the creation of a slack, shadowy simulacrum of Char's achievement. A response less abundantly assenting, and a method that was *formally* structural, *unimpressionistic* and unriven to *windings* descriptive or otherwise, would have been better able to show us that achievement face to face.



René Char with Pablo Picasso at Mougins, 1965, photographed by Jacqueline Picasso, from the summer 1977 issue of World Literature Today *(University of Oklahoma Press. Quarterly: $13.50 pa); the issue is subtitled "Focus on René Char". It includes an introductory essay by WLT's editor Ivar Ivask, who also contributes a poem of tribute to Char, as does John Hollander; two new poems by Char himself; articles by Peter and Mary Ann Caws; C. A. Hackett on aphorism, Jean Gaudon on ambiguities and Michael J. Worton on juxtaposition—all in the poetry of Char; L. C. Breunig on Char in English; and Henri Peyre on the love poetry.*

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The urge to know

By Patrick McCarthy

JACQUES RIVIÈRE :
Rimbaud, Dossier 1905-1925
Edited by Roger Lefèvre
225pp. Paris : Gallimard. 39fr.

Au pays d'Alain-Fournier
Viroflay : Bulletin des Amis de Jacques Rivière et Alain-Fournier, Nos 2, 3 and 4.

Jacques Rivière has been unlucky in his posthumous existence : he is remembered chiefly as the friend of Alain-Fournier and as the supposed disciple of Gide. In the history of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* his years as editor—1919 to 1925—seem a mere prelude to Jean Paulhan's long reign. This is unfair because Rivière was an interesting, important man. By temperament he was volatile, oscillating between despair and enthusiasms which changed very rapidly. His inner life was a drama which he both enjoyed and feared. "There is a violence in me", he said, correctly ; but he tried his best to suppress it. No one at the *NRF*—certainly not the pontificating Claudel—was as hard on himself as Rivière.

He came to the *NRF* in 1909 and in the next years his articles focus on the various debates which the group was conducting. "Le roman d'aventure" outlines a new kind of psychological adventure novel, just when Gide was toiling, unsuccessfully, to write one in *Les caves du Vatican*. But Rivière shook off influences as quickly as he absorbed them : in "De la Foi" he rejects Claudel's triumphant brand of Catholicism. Throughout these essays runs a cluster of personal themes. Rivière was fascinated, for example, by movement, and in the Russian ballet he saw his own warring desires acted out ; the dancers incarnated conflicts and contradictions without having to resolve them. Rivière was not really writing criticism at all ; his essays were fragments of autobiography. In his articles on painting he hesitates over Cubism because he fears that his own mind is too abstract, he is ascetic enough to distrust Matisse's dazzling facility and he prefers Cézanne because he loves lines and solid objects. By reconstructing his age and by arguing with his friends, Rivière was defining himself.

Rimbaud, Dossier 1905-1925, excellently edited by Roger Lefèvre, contains all Rivière's writings on the poet, including his two *NRF* articles of 1914. Once more he shows his originality. Rimbaud was much read at the *NRF* but there were as many Rimbauds as admirers. For Claudel, Rimbaud was the " mystique à l'état sauvage " who had guided him to Catholicism ; for Larbaud, who was writing his *Enfantines*, Rimbaud was the poet who had miraculously recaptured his childhood. The key to Rivière's interest lies in this passage : " Rimbaud's work is a collection of experiments, of raw documentation ; it is concerned solely with the object ; it does not bother with us, it turns its back on us . . . in Rimbaud I can touch that immense body of truth which I hope one day to embrace in its entirety."

Rimbaud's visions are not an exercise of poetic imagination nor even exceptional moments of insight ; they are an investigation of the metaphysical. Despising himself and the reader, Rimbaud seeks only to understand the other world and to render it in a concrete form. A year earlier Rivière had written in "Le roman d'aventure" that the novelist, as well as creating spontaneous, mobile characters, will study them in order to explain the human mind. The urge to know was Rivière's guiding passion. It runs through his various enthusiasms—he soon turned away from Rimbaud—and gives unity to his thought.

In the 1914 war Rivière was captured, almost managed to escape, fell gravely ill, became a Catholic and wrote his best book, the *Carnets*. This describes a huge effort of abnegation where he wants to give up everything, even literature, in order to expose himself to God. He returned from the war and, mobile as ever, published the vitriolically anti-German pamphlet " L'Allemand ", the only book where he reveals his violent nature. As editor of the *NRF* he imposed two great themes. The first was that modern literature should be a new kind of positivism. Rivière rejected Dada and the Surrealists because he found them incoherent, and he defended Proust. He also studied Freud, not as a healer but as an explorer of the subconscious. These two, felt Rivière, were models, men who had discovered new techniques to penetrate the mind. The second theme was a policy of reconciliation with Germany. Reacting against " L'Allemand ", Rivière overcame the Action Française supporters at the *NRF* and criticized the harsh peace settlement. In 1924 he opposed the occupation of the Ruhr and supported the Cartel des Gauches. The *NRF* had now become a forum of internationalism : Gide also took a pro-German stance, Curtius came to the Pontigny meetings and Larbaud contributed a flood of translations from English and Spanish. Rivière's years as editor were turbulent, as befitted his combative nature. By 1924 he was immersing himself in novel writing and, had he not died, he would probably have switched direction again.

Fournier's posthumous fate has been the opposite of Rivière's : he is almost too well known and for the wrong reasons. Many biographers have explored his love affairs, from the one extraordinary meeting with Yvonne de Quiévrecourt on Ascension Day 1905 to the tempestuous years with the actress Simone Beuda. The reasons for Fournier's fame lie, one suspects, in his failures. In his life he never recovered from the experience of losing his adolescence. When he met Yvonne again in 1913 he did not really want her and, although he tried during his stays at Lourdes to merge the memory of her with the Virgin Mary, his Catholicism does not go deep. Fournier was moody and self-indulgent and he often exasperated Rivière. Yet this makes his life all the more interesting as an extreme example of a general problem. His death in the first battles of 1914 seems, like his friend Péguy's, to be curiously appropriate. *Le Grand Meaulnes* does not answer Fournier's problem either. If the second half of the book is less good than the first and if it relies heavily on imitations of other writers from Dostoevsky to Hugo, it is surely because Fournier does not know how Meaulnes can go beyond his initial vision of Yvonne de Galais. Yet this artifice makes the novel easier and it accentuates the freshness of the early chapters.

It masks, however, Fournier's real ability as a writer. These two small volumes, *Au pays d'Alain-Fournier*, explain his links with the region of Central France and show that he had a genuine grasp of countryside and peasantry. Fournier was determined to root his dream of love in solid, everyday reality. His long apprenticeship as a writer led him to discard the prose-poem and to study weighty English novelists like Dickens, Stevenson and Hardy. He particularly admired the quick movement of the plot in *Treasure Island* and the deep insight of the peasant girls in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Meanwhile he was also trying to write in short, concise sentences and to stress concrete details.

In 1910 he began to earn his living as a journalist and contributed a regular column to the newspaper *Paris-Journal*. Fournier turned out to be a surprisingly good reporter who could fix an event in a few lines and excelled at portraits. In thousands of pages he wrote constant dict the impression of a man and young man who left only one book, the novel. There is a tough strain in Fournier's character and in his writing. Journalism helped him to be concrete in the opening chapters of *Le Grand Meaulnes*, when the school, the yard and the village stand out sharply and make us share the emotions of childhood seem real. Only later does the reader realize that he has been tricked, that this Third Republic village has no lessons seem to be taught and the teacher has no authority. Fournier has used realistic details to create a world of his own.

Fournier remained on the fringes of the *NRF*, distrustful of Gide and tempted by outside influences like Péguy ; Rivière was always at the centre of the web, battling to assert his independence. The early *NRF* is too often seen as Gide's private domain, whereas it was the work of a group which conducted a series of dialogues, each writer drawn to and reacting against others. By 1912 Rivière was freeing himself from Gide, who in turn moved closer to Larbaud. These shifts are reflected in the review, where, for example, Claudel's translation of Chesterton is followed by Fournier and Rivière being given provided of the numerous examined. One would like to know more about other members of the group too : about the anglophile Larbaud, or Fargue, who used to poke fun at the solemn Gide, or Charles-Louis Philippe who wrote such fine novels about working class life.

The literary cause

By Robert Gibson

ALBERT BEGUIN and MARCEL RAYMOND :
Lettres 1920-1957
258pp. Paris : La Bibliothèque des Arts. 72fr.

Although clearcut idiosyncrasies separate the individual members of the Geneva School of critics, they remain united by a number of essential articles of faith. Chief among these is their belief that the critic should relive his author's work as empathetically as possible " from the inside ", yet that literary criticism, far from being parasitic, is a form of literature in its own right ; literature itself is the supreme manifestation of and most effective aid to reverie, that intense species of spiritual meditation associated with Switzerland over the centuries through Rousseau, the Coppet circle, Senancour, Amiel and Ramuz. Such views, applied to a wide range of modern writers but regularly related to their cultural traditions, are consistently and often eloquently reiterated throughout this attractive series of letters exchanged over nearly four decades between Marcel Raymond, the founder and doyen of the Geneva School, and Albert Béguin, the first and foremost of his disciples.

The correspondence begins in 1920 with Raymond, a widowed research student in Paris, sending back detailed reports on the literary scene to Béguin in Geneva. It ends in 1957, after Béguin's relatively early death, with a brief extract from Raymond's autobiography, *Le Sel et la cendre*, recording the day his father died in the act of writing a letter and hoping that he too might remain master of his pen till the very last moment.

This could well stand as epigraph to a volume which is concerned almost exclusively with writing about writing. Each seeks to convert the other to his latest enthusiasm : Raymond is drawn to Ronsard, Baudelaire, Rousseau and Valéry while Béguin remains loyal to the German Romantics, Nerval, Péguy and Bernanos ; each describes the composition and critical reception of his own masterpiece, Raymond's *Du Baudelaire au Surréalisme* (1933) and Béguin's *L'Ame romantique et le rêve* (1937) ; each assumes in turn the control of a major publishing venture, Raymond with *Les Cahiers du Rhône*, Béguin with the Catholic journal, *L'Esprit*. From the outset, when they are apprentices enthusiastically learning their craft from Jacques Rivière, to the end, when they have both achieved considerable distinction as university professors of literature and as master-critics in their own right, their abiding concern is how best to formulate and then to disseminate their responses to literary texts.

Some of the letters are of more than literary interest : each writer comes to recognize that he is engaged on a lifelong quest for spiritual fulfilment and reports intermittently to the other on his progress towards his goal ; occasionally, a more intimate note is sounded when they express grief for the loss of a beloved parent or anguish over the fall of France. For the most part, however, the writers remain too diffident to gossip about themselves and preserve, too lofty a view of the status of literature to gossip about other writers. Partly for these reasons and partly because many letters are missing from periods of crucial importance, this volume is nothing like as rich in human or literary interest as the Rivière-Fournier correspondence or the copious exchanges of letters now available involving André Gide.

In spite of these limitations, the Raymond-Béguin letters can be recommended to any serious student of the twentieth-century French literary scene. Attractively edited by Gilbert Guisan, who has supplied a wealth of informative footnotes and a somewhat eccentric index, they constitute an eloquent record of two lives tirelessly devoted to the cause of literature.

Along predetermined lines

By F. W. J. Hemmings

MAURICE LARKIN :
Man and Society in Nineteenth-Century Realism
201pp. Macmillan. £8.95.

Maurice Larkin is a well-known professional historian, and I am nothing of the kind. Not surprisingly, the passages in his book that, in a non-historian, I found made the most absorbing reading were those in which Professor Larkin offers clear, succinct, and illuminating accounts of certain aspects of historical change within the period he is concerned with : the section entitled " Alberich's Cave " on the coming of the Industrial Revolution to Britain ; another section pinpointing the contrast between the stagnant society of Tsarist Russia, where thoughts on the purpose of life simmer slowly with the " long manover ", and the feverishly developing societies of the industrializing West ; or the six pages devoted to a masterly analysis of the origins, nature and impact of the economic depression of 1873-96. One returns with a bump, after these heady excursions, to the pathetic struggles of Mrs Gaskell, Chekhov or Zola to make contemporary sense of what posterity can survey and evaluate with such assurance.

I take it that the question anyone picking up this book would want answered before he started reading it is whether the author's purpose is to reinterpret the masterpieces of nineteenth-century realism in the light of the social reality which nurtured them, or whether, conversely, he is seeking to shed new light on this social reality by showing how it was reflected in the works of a few keen-sighted and gifted writers living in the period he has selected for his survey. These are two quite different aims, and, as far as the latter is concerned, it must be said that any reader who is looking for literary reinterpretations of a new kind will be disappointed : the analyses Professor Larkin has to offer are, with the exception of a few isolated passages, not very original. There seems to be a general view that anyone can read a novel ; and the uses commonly made of novels as evidence, sociological or other, would seem to illustrate that view. Actually, to use novels as evidence or illustration the kinds of novel that are most significant and have most to offer requires an uncommon skill, the product of a kind of training that few readers submit themselves to —or, it could be added, that few historians have either the time or the patience to undergo.

One has, indeed, the impression that Professor Larkin is rather more interested in his authors as representative spokesmen for the nineteenth-century view of things than as novelists or playwrights who created works of literature sufficiently powerful to have survived. The analyses he provides of *Wozzeck*, *L'Education sentimentale* or *Fathers and Sons* are primarily extensions of, or glosses on, the " brief lives " of Büchner, Flaubert and Turgenev that precede them. These biographical thumbnail sketches include perceptive accounts of the intellectual development of the authors, for Professor Larkin's book is also, in part, a history of ideas, with condensed but well-formulated summaries of the impact made, at different stages, by the teaching of Condillac and Helvétius, Lamarck and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Darwin and Herbert Spencer.

Each of these thinkers affected to some extent the evolution of attitudes towards the old dilemma of determinism and free will. Reduced to its essentials, Professor Larkin's argument is that, with the " death of God " that took place some time in the eighteenth century, thinking men and women were for a long while at a loss to see how personal moral values could survive in a social system which seemed more and more to deny the individual any genuine freedom of action. Ibsen is a case in point : " his acceptance of determinism as an unpalatable but inescapable fact was at odds with his instinctive admiration for self-assertion and independence of mind, qualities which the poet in him saw as an emanation of free will ". In much the same way we find Balzac displaying " an awed respect for human capabilities, despite his fondness for deterministic explanation ". The only one of the authors considered here who appears to have lifted herself off the horns of this dilemma was George Eliot, and her way of dealing with the problem was characteristically bleak : it may be that we err because circumstances compel us to err, but it is none the less important that we should understand and confess our moral failure, since such knowledge is in itself a determining circumstance that will help us to mould a better future.

The argument is, of course, an argument about what writers thought, not about what their books or plays actually offer us found incidentally, how strange that with his overriding interest in the determinist/free will controversy, Professor Larkin should nowhere discuss or even refer to *War and Peace*, the one novel in which this theme is absolutely paramount !). In literary terms, the important question is not whether an author subscribes to a determinist philosophy, but whether, and if so to what extent, he presents his characters to exercising free will.

Thus, the most powerful individuals in the *Comédie humaine*, those who seem to defy, Prometheus-like, the demands of society that they should compensate—Baron Hulot, Balthazar Claës, even old Goriot—are precisely those who appear to have the least free will, since they are the slaves of the particular passion that rules them. Everything depends on the novelist's or dramatist's skill in manipulating his reader or his audience so that they have the illusion that the character is autonomous.

Abstractly, of course, one knows that control is exercised from the start. One knows that Stendhal has decided Julien Sorel will end up shooting Mme de Rénal, that Flaubert made up his mind before he started that Emma Bovary would swallow the arsenic, that Tinsletten was predetermined by Fontane to repudiate Effi. But if all these acts —or one or the other—strike us as being freely undertaken by the characters, this is to be attributed to the novelist's art ; his art, the one thing about which Professor Larkin has nothing to say in this book.

Deep in the dream-stuff

By George Craig

MICHEL BUTOR :
Second sous-sol
218pp. Paris : Gallimard. 39fr.

Michel Butor's explicit re-working of dreams began with *Matière de rêve*. That has now become the general title, and *Second sous-sol* is Volume 2. But it is more than a matter of arithmetic. If there are, once again, five dreams with a common formal structure, and even deliberate echoes of the first collection, it is soon apparent that here we are to be plunged much deeper into the stuff of dreams. Where, before, there was an " I " to whom events occurred—adventures, memories, fears, desires —" I " now is simply the name of that which moves through continual, rapid and total change ; identity is as far away at the end as at the beginning. Where, in the first series, the private world of family recurred as a reassuringly secure base, it too is now no more than names attached to uncertain presences which flit erratically through the pages.

There can, one might say, be a strong and a weak reason for a shift of this order. According to the strong, M Butor would, both as dreamer and as author, be free to explore these wild and whirling worlds in the certain expectation of an " I " : he has, after all, dreamt —and survived the experience ; he is a writer with a family ; and he can count on his readers' consent. Moreover, on this reckoning, his attempt to find a formal equivalent for the early, chaotic stages of dream-work would be bold and admirable.

The weak reason runs very differently. This way round, M Butor would be drawing illicitly (for the purposes of dreaming are always and only self-directed, while those of writing are not) on the wild, untested extravagance of dream processes ; and specifically on condensation and displacement.

What *is* clear is that the insistent challenge of the text makes some kind of resolution indispensable ; for here, unlike the world of Surrealist painting (awareness of which is everywhere present), there is the heavy pressure of duration, of images, quotations, memories checkable and uncheckable, private truths or fictions, grandiloquence and irony flood the pages. The dreams end as strange and dark as they began, but the narrating voice moves confidently on, as if its unchallengeable task were to recount everything that makes up a person, from visceral yearnings to the inflections of sentiment and the consciousness of received culture. Then again, the formulaic transitional phrases, which provided such a powerful formal ordering in the first series, have themselves grown in number and density to a point where they form an alternative verbal world to that of the episodes ; in one dream, indeed—the central one—taking over from them. No longer do they serve as mere decipherable indicators ; rather they claim the autonomy, and the function, of musical motifs in large-scale orchestration : space, with the movements of moon and stars, the technology of communication and travel ; time, on the scale of the book and on that of the world ; birth—conception, gestation, delivery, nurture, relatedness.

Within the episodes, by contrast, it is not these outer or conceptual realities which matter, but the emphasis is on images of incompleteness, disintegration, expulsion and re-incorporation — grotesque foetal journeyings across amniotic seas, imaging the double desire of humans for infinite safety and infinite adventure. And sure enough, since this is no abstract exercise, there appear, here and there through the mass of words, autobiographical hints ; although " c'est un secret qu'il ne faut trahir que très lentement " for, otherwise, " tout est à refaire, et plus durement encore ".

Second sous-sol really does take us further down and in, but for all the local brilliance and the occasional poignancy of these " crid manuscrits ", it is hard not to feel that M Butor's conscious mind is hoping to *impose* order on what can never be ordered, since it is itself the source of all ordering. The dominant colour given to each dream remains arbitrary, as does any attempt to render in a single idiom " cet enfer stylistique ".

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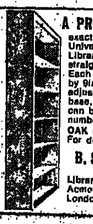


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GORDON FRASER GF

Fools, villains and wise fools

By Christophe Campos

ROBERT McBRIDE :
The Sceptical Vision of Molière
250pp. Macmillan. £10.

ROGER IKOR :
Molière double
231pp. Presses Universitaires de France. 52 fr.

Molière, we used to be told, wrote with the classical purpose of ridiculing and chastising the foibles of his time. He progressed from farces to complex social comedies which are paragons of their genre, and though beset by domestic worries and court intrigue, professed, through certain of his characters, a humane, middle-of-the-road epicureanism. Over the past thirty years authoritative critics have rejected these old assumptions as naïve and tautological, as well as somewhat romantic. Since René Bray and W. G. Moore renewed Molière studies, no one has felt able seriously to disregard the social, technical and dramatic conditions of which the text of a play is the result; or the possibility that plays previously considered secondary may throw light on the more baroque, courtly ones; or the fact that the moral "message" is conveyed, if at all, by the total dramatic balance, not by individual speeches.

Both these books acknowledge those principles in part, but revert unfortunately to discredited assumptions. Neither represents an important step forward in Molière studies, though neither will fail to interest the already informed reader.

Robert McBride's *The Sceptical Vision of Molière* is the more academic of the two, but not always in the good sense of the word. It is pontentous and wordy, straying from the point to introduce lecture-room parentheses or aborted articles on related issues: a long discussion of the two versions of *Tartuffe* and a digression on Alceste's character belong to different books, and there are too many elaborate paraphrases of plot, not always accurate in detail. Also, the language is awkward, relying on pleonasm ("the story is merely just another tale . . "), tautology ("is it possible to be sincere, in a world where absolute sincerity does not exist ?"), and the lecturer's stock-in-trade of defensive non-statements ("multiple comic ambiguities", "embedded in the comic texture of the play"), provocative to students but tedious for readers. The English is peppered with gallicisms ("ineluctable" for inescapable; "nuanced" for subtle) and with italicized French words (*scène, libertin, réplique*) where English ones (scene, free-thinker, retort) would do just as well.

The book attempts an appraisal of Molière's philosophic position in relation to sceptical philosophy, with special reference to his acquaintance with La Mothe Le Vayer. A. J. Sells pointed this connection out in the 1930s in a somewhat florid article, but only René Jasinski, in his book on *Le Misanthrope*, has made extensive use of it. Most critics still rely on Brunetière's analysis of eighty years ago, and connect Molière somewhat hazily with Gassendi. In fact, so many of Molière's characters' speeches interlace so closely with the sceptic La Mothe Le Vayer's reflections, well pinpointed by Dr McBride, that it is difficult to decide—there is no external evidence—which is source and which gloss. Five major plays are dealt with: *Tartuffe* is particularly well analysed, with detailed reference to the religious controversies of the time and illustrated from Pascal, Le Moyne and St Francis de Sales.

The ground is then clear (or would be, if the book were not so diffuse) for an assessment of the plays as dramatic statements of scepticism based on examples of contradictions in human behaviour. Not only do people like Alceste and Célimène coexist, and even contrive to fall in love with each other, but —since the misanthropist needs an audience and the coquette at least one earnest suitor—their individual positions are untenable. Nor does Philinte escape this sort of criticism : having to think little of Oronte's sonnet, yet praise it, to see through Célimène's set yet tolerate them, to allow Alceste to use him unfairly and yet support him to the last. Dr McBride suggests that Molière distances himself from all the characters, and depicts three sorts of people : "fools", who think they can be more reasonable than anyone else (Orgon, Alceste, Philaminte), "villains", who realize that appearances rule the world and decide to use them for their own ends (Tricastin, Tartuffe, Don Juan), and "wise fools" (Chrysalde, Cléante, Philinte) who agree basically with the first group by recognizing rational values, but act superficially like the second by adjusting their behaviour to the demands of the situation.

Though this classification is interesting, I fear there is only a fine distinction between the "wise fool" and the old theory of Michaut's, rejected vigorously at the beginning of this book, according to which Chrysalde, Cléante, Philinte and the other "raisonneurs" are Molière's own mouthpieces. What has been achieved is at best a new and somewhat over-explicit version of the old "middle of the road" theory. In bringing less argumentative plays such as *Amphitryon* and *Dom Juan* into a philosophic discussion which practically excludes the dramatic dimension, Dr McBride disregards another tenet of modern Molière criticism, and uses them reductively. *Amphitryon*, for instance, where Molière uses a *locus classicus* of comedy to cock a snook at supreme authority, shows us a Jupiter caught in the act of using appearances to immoral ends, thus qualifying as a villain, while Sosie, firmly believing one thing but prepared under the threat of the stick to swear to another, is clearly a camp follower of Philinte. So far so good. Unfortunately Dr McBride insists on making Sosie play a course in seventeenth-century philosophy: Amphitryon, around whom the plot swivels, he takes to "exemplify the deep paradox that the true self can only be reached as an extension of one's essential rôle". Sosie, as he bows in turn to the sticks of Jupiter and of Amphitryon, Dr McBride interprets as obeying the logic of Descartes's "cogito".

With *Dom Juan* too, philosophical sledge hammers are taken to dramatic nuts. The scene between Don Juan and the poor man, we are told, is there to illustrate a basic sceptical idea, namely that "ethical codes can merely have a relative and not absolute value, because of the situational contingency to which they are exposed" (or, in plain English, that you must cut your coat to suit your cloth). Maybe ; yet this scene also has specifically dramatic functions : it is one of various encounters which Molière expects to strike a sensitive chord in one spectator or another and help to create a emotional reaction against Don Juan —even if you agree with Don Juan and can not bear the M Dimanche of this world, you may side with the poor man against the aristocrat in the previous scene. Unfortunately, this sort of consideration is not to be found here.

Nothing could be more different from Dr McBride's essay than Roger Ikor's informal, chatty work, which refuses to have any truck with those he calls "écrivassseurs", to the extent of discarding sustained argument, logic, and even occasionally common sense. *Molière double* contains some remarkably silly statements—a considerable number of them being concentrated in a gratuitous comparison between Molière and Stendhal at the end of which we are told that Molière was afraid of impotence—and yet Ikor occasionally shows a journalist's flair for the telling phrase that needs no gloss.

Thus, on the question of Philinte's superiority over Alceste, demonstrated painstakingly by Dr McBride, M Ikor finds the appropriate aphorism: "Philinte inclut Alceste alors qu'Alceste exclut Philinte" (*Dom Juan*), and "wise fools" (Chrysalde, Cléante, Philinte) who agree basically with the first group by recognizing rational values, but act superficially like the second by adjusting their behaviour to the demands of the situation.

M Ikor has set out in search of originality in what he knows is a very overworked field. This shaky basis leads him quickly into unsubstantiated generalizations on the demography of matrimony in the seventeenth century, romanticized retellings of episodes from the plays (a remarkable novelette about two people called Tartuffe and Elmire is included), and the rediscovery of obvious truths (such as that Molière's plays deplore the struggle between candour and falsehood). He has two general points to make. The first, which turns the clock of criticism back thirty years, is that Molière's plays are, after all, a chain of self-discovery where all the characters interlock and everything can be related to biographical data.

The second, which is somewhat more convincing, though not very well substantiated, is that Molière's main comic characters live in a world with such a strong sense of hierarchy as to expose them constantly to the temptation of oppressing their fellows : an evident feature of Louis XIV's court and reign, one very much on the surface in *Dom Juan*, and also part of the make-up of all the comic characters. To see this as the main moral element in the plays may indeed be more fruitful than to search for the vices Molière is supposed to have castigated, which all too often boil down to hypocrisy and avarice.

In this connection, a fine passage on the different strata in Tartuffe's personality shows how perceptive M Ikor can be when he applies his lucid understanding of dramatic character to textual criticism. His reading of Tartuffe as a chastened and wiser Don Juan, still the overbearing aristocrat but having made his peace with the *cabale*, is a tempting one.

The poetry of private life

By Michael Hamburger

Was Alles hat Platz in einem Gedicht ? is a miscellany of essays by various authors written over the same period, and bearing on the same issues. It opens with Walter Höllerer's aphoristic defence of the long poem—now more correctly construed as a defence of the "open" poem—originally published in 1965 and 1966, and Karl Krolow's reply to it. The order in which the contributions are presented makes the collection look more documentary or historical than the undisguisedly tendentious *Veränderung der Lyrik*, but in fact the material has been selected with an eye to the latest trend, which is glorified in the editors' epilogue. Walter Höllerer's contribution, therefore, assumes the character of a programme or prophecy, though it was written as a statement of his own predilections and preoccupations at the time. Yet the net has been cast more widely, and the contributions by Peter Rühmkorf, Hans Christoph Buch, Helmut Heissenbüttel, Günter Kunert and Nicolas Born were well worth reprinting in their own right, apart from their relevance to current debates. Nicolas Born is one of the poets associated with the new trend ; others represented in the collection are Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, Günter Herburger, Michael Krüger (as its co-editor), and Jürgen Theobaldy, who contributes an early version of the first chapter of *Veränderung der Lyrik*.

By its intelligent and witty insights into the necessary dialectic of formalism and commitment, Peter Rühmkorf's essay of 1967 offers one corrective to general prescriptions for poetry. (A similar dialectic informed Walter Höllerer's "theses" on the long poem.) Another corrective is to be found in Axel Vieregg's excellent book *Die Lyrik Peter Huchels*, whose work he shows to be at once realistic and symbolic, ethically committed and what Theobaldy would call "hermetic". Theobaldy's polemic, therefore, is not so much the minimalism of the preceding trend as a much earlier modernism rooted in the Romantic-symbolist aesthetic.

Gustav Zürcher, in the same book, selects most concrete and linguistically experimental poetry, but makes an exception of those writers of the Vienna group, such as Ernst Jandl and Gerhard Rühm, who have applied the techniques of concrete poetry to moral, satirical or humorous ends. (Helmut Heissenbüttel, who has done just that with remarkable consistency, is not treated as an exception.) Peter Handke is given credit for taking concrete poetry out of the language laboratory by a related application of its processes to concerns at once personal and social. Something of this order happens in the idiosyncratic poems of Paul Wühr, *Grüss Gott ihr Mütter ihr Väter ihr Töchter ihr Söhne*, by a combination of concrete serial techniques with colloquial phrases, partly in dialect, for grotesquely, often scurrilously, satirical effects. Zürcher also provides a succinct account of the development of political poetry in the 1950s and 1960s. Theobaldy's contribution—three chapters out of five in the book—is equally useful where he confines himself to facts or analysis, and the book includes a chronological table of collections and anthologies published between 1965 and 1975.

Two recent books document and promulgate the present trend, which Jürgen Theobaldy, co-author of one of them and a leading practitioner, calls "the new subjectivity", "the new sensibility" and "the new realism". In *Veränderung der Lyrik* he begins by claiming that the death of Paul Celan in 1970 marked the end of a literary era in West Germany, one dominated by hermeticism and a "regressive babbling" (deduced from Celan's poem "Tübingen, Jänner") that corresponded to "the regression of society in the war and post-war years" ; and that Celan was "the last German poet, provisionally, to regard himself as a seer". The new poets avoid metaphors, make use of any sort of subject-matter, and reflect the social realities of their time both in their diction and in their self-identification with "so-called ordinary people". The target of Theobaldy's polemic, therefore, is not so much the minimalism of the preceding trend as a much earlier modernism rooted in the Romantic-symbolist aesthetic.

Gustav Zürcher, in the same book, selects most concrete and linguistically experimental poetry, but makes an exception of those writers of the Vienna group, such as Ernst Jandl and Gerhard Rühm, who have applied the techniques of concrete poetry to moral, satirical or humorous ends. (Helmut Heissenbüttel, who has done just that with remarkable consistency, is not treated as an exception.) Peter Handke is given credit for taking concrete poetry out of the language laboratory by a related application of its processes to concerns at once personal and social. Something of this order happens in the idiosyncratic poems of Paul Wühr, *Grüss Gott ihr Mütter ihr Väter ihr Töchter ihr Söhne*, by a combination of concrete serial techniques with colloquial phrases, partly in dialect, for grotesquely, often scurrilously, satirical effects. Zürcher also provides a succinct account of the development of political poetry in the 1950s and 1960s. Theobaldy's contribution—three chapters out of five in the book—is equally useful where he confines himself to facts or analysis, and the book includes a chronological table of collections and anthologies published between 1965 and 1975.

Paul Celan explicitly denied that he was a hermetic poet. That he was a difficult poet, with difficult things to communicate, is undeniable ; but the difficulty, more often than not, was due to the very precision and starkness of his manner, and it is a difficulty present in the work of any poet not content with a "low mimetic" rendering of generally accepted realities. Nor can difficulty of another order be avoided by poets associated with the present trend. Much of Nicolas Born's poetry is difficult, because it renders a complex of perceptions, responses and thoughts that are not necessarily anyone's. Jürgen Becker's poems can be difficult, for related reasons ; and many of Brinkmann's could be bewildering to a reader not at home in the particular "scenes", German, American or English, that are their settings.

Recent books by younger West German poets reveal both the strength and the flaws of the kind of poetry now so widely and vociferously advocated. Günter Herburger's large collection *Ziele* has great vigour and variety ; but again and again one finds oneself wondering whether a poem could not have been written just as well—or better—in prose, as a story or a sketch. The "material" of a poem like "Als Ich Amerika sah" is interesting enough, as narrative or anecdote, to hold one's attention for the moment, but that is all. Herburger is at his best in poems that are indeed more "subjective", like "Keine Fügung", and leave scope for fantasy. His dangers are looseness and coarseness of texture, not helped by his resort to rhyming of a kind or folk-song pastiche. For many readers these shortcomings will be redeemed by Herburger's generous concern and sympathies, as in his poem "Der Gesang der Wale".

Johannes Schenk, a younger poet and the author of *Zittern*, shares Herburger's liking for the narrative and anecdotal, and his tendency towards prosiness, offset by the vividness of Portuguese and American impressions — partly drawn from his experiences as a sailor. Autobiographical themes are prominent in many collections by younger poets. Herburger's contains a poem on his father, "Sturz der Götter". Schenk's a portrait of a great-grandfather who set up a second home, and a second marriage in New York; Ursula Krechel's *Nach Mainz !* opens with an eloquent poem about her mother, and Rolf Haufs's *Die Geschwindigkeit eines einzigen Tages* has poems about his father and a grandmother, as well as other childhood recollections.

The American affinities of many younger poets are also striking. Herburger, Schenk, Krechel and Ludwig Fels, like Brinkmann before them, include poems set in America ; and Schenk's poem "Philip Weichbergers Beschreibung des Weges an Ihn", a mere string of laconic directions, is one of many whose deliberate casualness was picked up from American poets. Schenk's appeal, too, lies in the warmth and openness of his responses ; but that does not save his commemorative poem "Bill Dolrymple" from falling into bathos even before the final exclamation, "Oh Tod, lass uns doch in Frieden". Slackness

JÜRGEN THEOBALDY and GUSTAV ZÜRCHER: *Veränderung der Lyrik : Über westdeutsche Gedichte seit 1965*. 195pp. Munich: Edition text + kritik. DM18.80.

PAUL WÜHR: *Grüss Gott ihr Mütter ihr Väter ihr Töchter ihr Söhne*. 96pp. Munich: Hanser. DM16.80.

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JOHANNES SCHENK: *Zittern*. 94pp. Berlin: Wagenbach. DM8.80.

LUDWIG FELS: *Alles geht weiter*. 80pp. Darmstadt: Luchterhand. DM12.

URSULA KRECHEL: *Nach Mainz !* 71pp. Darmstadt: Luchterhand. DM12.

ROLF HAUFS: *Die Geschwindigkeit eines einzigen Tages*. 73pp. Reinbek: Rowohlt. DM10.

JÖRG STEINER: *Als es noch Grenzen gab*. 52pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM14.

BEAT BRECHBÜHL: *Traumhimmer*. 140pp. Cologne: Benziger. DM18.80.

SARAH KIRSCH: *Rückenwind*. 88pp. Berlin: Aufbau. 7.20M.

ELKE ERB: *Einer schreit : nicht !* 75pp. Berlin: Wagenbach. DM7.80.

WALTER NEUMANN: *Gedichte*. 64pp. Munich: Delp.

CYRUS ATABAY: *Das Auftauchen an einem anderen Ort*. 80pp. Frankfurt: Insel. DM16.

RAINER MALKOWSKI: *Einladung ins Freie*. 95pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM16.

KARL KROLOW: *Der Einfachheit halber*. 91pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM18.

ROSE AUSLÄNDER: *Gesammelte Gedichte*. 571pp. Cologne: Literarischer Verlag Braun. DM28.

ROSE AUSLÄNDER: *Selected Poems*. Translated by Ewald Osers. 72pp. *London Magazine Editions*. £2.75.

HANS CHRISTOPH BUCH (Editor): *Tintenfisch 12*. 137pp. Berlin: Wagenbach. DM9.80.

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due to an over-reliance on group attitudes, group sentiments and group jargons as a temptation to many of the poets anew or less in line with the "new subjectivity". Ludwig Fels, too, in *Alles geht weiter* commemorates a dead friend (in "Letzte Bekanntschaft") by arguing with him in much the same terms as he might have used in conversation, apostrophizing him as "Mann" or "Oh Mann", and showing no awareness that very great skill and rigour are needed to make the fuzzy vernacular of his age-group pull its weight in verse.

Ursula Krechel links the "new subjectivity" to the epigrammatic and satirical didacticism of the 1960s. Her diction remains sharp-edged, whether her theme is feminist, as in "Unsaurz", or socialist, as in "Aussichten". The political activism of the 1960s is effectively contrasted with the present mood of apathy and disillusionment in "Die alten Freunde" and "Busstage".

Rolf Haufs, too, excels at satire, as in "Deutscher Wald". His use of Berlin dialect, like Herburger's Swabian dialect poems, is in line with another dominant trend, the revival of regionalism in West German literature. Haufs, too, has a tendency to tell stories, but employs a cinematic technique of flashes much more conducive to poetic effects, if only because it leaves gaps to be filled by the reader's imagination. Haufs's verbal inventiveness and his wit are other characteristics that set his work apart.

Despite the trend towards regionalism, new books by the Swiss poets Jörg Steiner (*Als es noch Grenzen gab*) and Beat Brechbühl (*Traumbimmer*) raise no national barriers, linguistic or otherwise. Since his first collection, published in 1965, Jörg Steiner has widened the range of his moral and social preoccupations, without losing the economy and directness of his early poems. The new collection, too, is a small one, but seems weightier than many large ones by poets who lack his subtlety and perceptiveness. Brechbühl's book is a selection from all his published collections, together with a new sequence of poems and a group of prose-poems based on dreams. Unlike many of his West German coevals, Brechbühl does not shun metaphor. He excels at poems that permit a dreamlike freedom of association.

Nor does the dichotomy of formalism and commitment seem to worry the East German poet Sarah Kirsch (now living in West Germany) whose excellent new collection, *Rückenwind*, is inhibited neither by didacticism nor by pressures of "social relevance". Her unashamedly personal and imaginative love poems point to one striking difference between younger East and West German poets generally, the much more positive attitude of the former to history and literary tradition—perhaps because they no longer feel impelled to regard these as the prerogative of a bourgeois culture. Sarah Kirsch alludes freely to Petrarch and Laura, Romeo and Juliet, and, in the sequence *Wiesparsdorf*, evokes and identifies with the Romantic writer Bettina Brentano. All this is carried off without the slightest self-consciousness or affectation. Awareness of the past is simply taken for granted, as a prerequisite of an adequate response to immediate experience. So, for that matter, are the social implications of personal relationships and private acts.

Another East German woman poet, Elke Erb, calls the prose-poems in *Einer schreit: nicht!* "stories", yet they have the density and suppleness lacking in the verbal texture of many of the verse narratives included in other books, and are all of a piece with the few poems in Elke Erb's collection. Fantasy and deep observation blend in the prose and verse, as they do in Sarah Kirsch's work, and dream images are freely drawn upon.

Walter Neumann, a West German poet born in Riga, has few affinities with the dominant school, the stance in his *Gedichte* being not so much non-political as anti-political, far reasons that become apparent in poems about his lost homeland, and others about violence of any colour committed in the service of a political cause. The religious basis of this stance is intimated more often than professed. His poems avoid dramatic gestures, and are all the more convincing for that.

A still more acute sense of displacement pervades the work of Cyrus Atabay, a Persian poet who writes mainly in German, and even the title of his new book, *Das Anfassen an einem anderen Ort*, refers in it—not with self-pity, characteristically, but with self-irony. Atabay's work has always been unfashionable, mainly because he is a traditionalist, and the tradition he represents combines mysticism with worldliness, seriousness with a paradoxical wit. His diction, too, maintains a precarious, but usually happy, balance between the colloquial and the archaic. His new collections include translations from Corbière that read like variations on some of Atabay's own themes.

Rainer Malkowski has been hailed as another practitioner of the "new subjectivity", but in its sophistication and understatement his work has more in common with that of Karl Krolow, who has been cultivating a poetry of private life for decades, than with that of his coevals. Malkowski's new collection, *Einladung ins Freie*, his second, brings him no closer to current trends. His diction remains fastidious, his sequence to everyday experience sceptical, individualistic and searching. Much the same is true of Karl Krolow's new book, *Der Einfachheit halber*, which continues his registering of little events, mixed feelings, with no radical shift of perspective or manner, though the new poems face up bravely and honestly to the process of aging.

Although it has become widely known only in the past few years, Rose Ausländer's work lies outside the range of present controversies and prescriptions. Born at Czernowitz (now Chernovtsy), Bukovina, into the once Jewish community to which Paul Celan belonged, she emigrated after the war to the United States, where she worked for nineteen years, writing a few poems in English, and has lived in West Germany since 1965. Her early work, including a book of poems published before the war, is lost. Yet the very substantial collection published for her seventieth birthday, *Gesammelte Gedichte*, is various and rich enough to make up for the loss. All the phases of her life, from her youth in a part of Europe that was Austrian, then Romanian, then Russian, to the war in which most of her relatives and friends were exterminated, and the years in New York, have left a residue in her poems, though few of them are directly autobiographical.

It is seems strange that so many of her more recent poems refer to words or the act of writing, this has to do with the importance their language assumes for those who have lost all other links with their past. The same urge to establish and maintain that continuity may explain Rose Ausländer's extraordinary productivity in recent years. (Another book of new poems has already followed her large collection.) This poet's individual, often elliptic, manner, if not her full thematic range, is conveyed to English readers in a small bilingual selection, *Selected Poems*, translated by Ewald Osers.

Although the "new subjectivity", "new sensibility", "new realism"—or whatever name is attached to the new trend—has released energies that were checked by the "new objectivity" of the 1960s, it goes without saying that subjectivity, in itself, is no more new than sensibility or realism; and Theobaldy is right in seeing the new trend not as an alternative to, but as an extension of, the political and social poetry of the 1960s. What distinguishes the poets associated with the "new subjectivity" from Karl Krolow, say, or Rainer Malkowski, is that the subjectivity they have practised is one assumed to be representative of a generation, a group or a class that has shaken off a "bourgeois" individualism and finicalness.

It also goes without saying, or ought to, that the work produced by these poets will come to be judged not by its novelty but by its quality. If certain reservations have been voiced here, it is because one disturbing feature of the West German literary scene is the speed with which it is made to shift, and one trend made to displace another. Some of those who promote this process, even if they are as fair-minded and intelligent as Jürgen Theobaldy, may not be fully aware of its connection with commercial and advertising procedures which they cannot wish to emulate; and the work of some of the younger poets seems to offer itself for instant consumption only, as the work of Colan, Huchel, Meister or Hölzer does not.

All the poets just named transcend individualism not by excluding private or personal experience from their work, nor by keeping up a persona easily identifiable with "so-called ordinary people", but by an exploration in depth of the human condition that reaches out beyond the accidents of immediate circumstance to history and myth. Meister's *Im Zeitspalt*, like Krolow's *Der Einfachheit halber*, confronts old age and death; but the language and imagery in Meister's book, which Theobaldy would call "visionary" or "hermetic", serves to distance that preoccupation from his own person in a way that Krolow's do not. The difference is not a matter of generations, groups or classes; and if the "poets" are indeed to be displaced by the storytellers and talkers, it will be "provisionally" at the most, a qualification of Theobaldy's claim that should not be overlooked.

At a time like the present all controversies about poetic trends are likely to look provisional at best, and the inability to believe in an assured future, like the inability to be bothered with the accounts for many features of the "new subjectivity" itself. The current issue of *Tintenfisch*, which together with the Rowohlt *Literaturmagazin* (see footnote below) is the literary miscellany most representative of the concerns of younger German writers, has been devoted to a much larger and more exotic matter: the conservation of nature. Contributions bearing on the theme include poems by Hans Krechel, Herburger and Theobaldy, but also by Huchel, Christoph Meckel, and the East Germans Sarah Kirsch, Rainer Kirsch and Adolf Endler. The prose contributions include work by the Swedish poet Lars Gustafsson, statistical information about pollution and the depletion of natural resources, and a challenging sequence of eleven "theses" on "ecological materialism" by Carl Amery, showing why "the industrial system, ultimately, is the human option against life and in favour of devastation", and concluding: "Until now materialism has been content to change the world; what is needed now is to conserve it."

Since the industrial system cuts across political divisions that have been of primary interest to West German intellectuals over the past fifteen years, Carl Amery's "theses" and their publication in this particular annual, could well prove more significant than squabbles about schools and trends. As a fronts old age and death; but the outstanding practitioner, and initiator, of the "new subjectivity", Nicolas Born, contributes a speech to the same issue, warning that "more and more clearly our history appears to be moving towards its annihilation . . . 80 per cent of what we experience now, of our outer reality, consists of synthetic materials, the remainder is pure work . . . We must not only become poorer, we must wish to become poorer. And we now need a redistribution of poverty, of need, so that everyone learns again what necessity is." Concerns like these could not only reconcile the mimetic realists to the seers but counteract the inbreeding and in-fighting that has come to beset West German literature.

Literaturmagazin 7 (382pp. Hamburg: Rowohlt, DM12) is devoted entirely to post-war (1945-55) literature. Disdaining "objectivity", the editors, Nicolas Born and Jürgen Manthey, announce that their labours have been informed by "suspicion" about their subject. This is clarified in Manthey's interesting opening essay, which shows how "business as usual during alterations" was the motto for German writers after 1945. Indeed Adorno observed that attachment to things of the intellect then seemed, if anything, "greater than in the years before the Nazi seizure of power". Immersion in culture, particularly in a nostalgic classicism, continued to be the alibi of those who claimed to have gone into "inward emigration" during the Third Reich (Manthey points out that the real exiles were still generally absent from literary debate). The volume includes a long conversation with Böll and Hermann Lenz, together with autobiographical pieces by Alfred Andersch, Helmut Heissenbüttel, Heinrich Vormweg ("Literature was a Refuge") and an interview with Wolfdietrich Schnurre,

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In the mouths of the speechless

By Martin Esslin

FRANZ XAVER KROETZ:
Weitere Aussichten
Ein Lesebuch
626pp. Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch. DM 29.80.

Franz Xaver Kroetz is undoubtedly one of the most successful among the younger generation of German playwrights. Born in Munich in 1946, he trained as an actor at the Reinhardt-Seminar in Vienna and scored his first great success in 1971. In masterly, clipped, almost monosyllabic dialogue Kroetz has succeeded in putting the least articulate section of German society on the stage and screen: Bavarian peasants, inarticulate to the point of animality, proletarians, whose only means of expression are the ready-made and repulsive clichés of the popular press or television advertisements. Of necessity the action of plays about such almost subhuman characters will also be fairly brutal, and Kroetz has become the leading light of a group of playwrights who might well be described as "brutalists".

Five years after his breakthrough into success Kroetz has an *oeuvre* of some twenty plays and screenplays to his credit. He has also, as an active member of the West German Communist party, taken a vigorous stand in a number of polemics. *Weitere Aussichten* is a massive collection of his journalistic output together with a number of older and newer plays, screenplays, radio and television scripts. The principle of selection is none too clear: Kroetz's best-known and most successful plays are not included, probably because they have already been published under other imprints. So the older and less successful scripts and the newest plays which are to be found in this *Kroetz-Primer* (and it must be said *Lesebuch* is a somewhat pretentious subtitle—as though these plays and articles ought to be the daily pabulum of schoolchildren) seem to be an almost random assembly of leftovers and not-yet-placed material. But perhaps even this explanation does not hold water: for, curiously enough, the book, although appearing under the imprint of a West German publisher is in fact an East German publication (Henscheiverlag of East Berlin) and printed in the GDR. So perhaps the selection merely reflects those aspects of Kroetz's work which have found favour in the East and can be offered without risk to East German readers.

That Kroetz is a playwright of exceptional talent is beyond doubt: the precision and originality with which he handles Bavarian dialect is masterly and so is his ability to let the unspoken thoughts of his primitive characters through the grunts and groans, the hums and haws of their speechlessness. The question which this particular selection of his writings poses, however, is the age-old problem of whether party political commitment might not be detrimental to an artist's development and achievement.

The juxtaposition, in this volume, of the author's dramatic writings with his political journalism and polemical outbursts sheds a peculiarly useful light on this problem. Those of Kroetz's plays in the book which are free from an over-obvious propagandist bias seem far more effective—even as political polemics—than his heavy-handed attempts to inject party-political object-lessons. And in the case of the play which I consider by far the best in the volume, *Das Nest* (The Nest), the intrusion of crude propaganda greatly diminishes the play's impact, human as well as political.

Das Nest is the story of a truck driver proud of his (West German) prosperity and affluence and his ability to earn considerable extra wages by carrying out "confidential" missions for his boss. He is very fond of his baby son and proud of his knowledge of the hidden beauties of the countryside surrounding Munich, which enables him to take his family on Sunday outings to lonely ponds free of urban crowds. When his boss offers him extra money for dumping a dangerous load of chemicals he takes it to one of those very ponds, unaware of the fact that his wife will shortly afterwards take the baby there to bathe. As the baby, badly poisoned, hovers between life and death, the marriage threatens to dissolve under the wife's reproaches. But the child recovers and the marriage is back to normal. The lesson of all this, with its mixture of a perceptive critique of the affluent West German working class with its materialistic outlook and a fashionable ecological line of argument, is only too clear. But then, in the last scene, Kurt, the anti-hero of the piece, threatened with ruin for having got his boss into trouble through the accident, produces a *deus ex machina*: the wife is afraid that the boss will see to it that Kurt will go to prison for his illegal dumping of the chemicals—but Kurt has the answer:

KURT: I don't know if it will do any good, but the shop-steward, from the union, you know, before we got going yesterday morning, came to me and told me that they've got wind of the matter.

MARTHA: Who from?

KURT: Oh, they have their channels.

MARTHA: But you aren't even a member of the union.

KURT: Yes, because the boss always said he doesn't like unions.

MARTHA: And what did he want?

KURT: He says, he has had a hint about it and if it's true what I told the police, they'll help us. That's what he said. (Pause) He said he'll come on Saturday, in the afternoon, to discuss it all, together with another fellow.

MARTHA: And what did you say?

KURT: Well, I said, he should come.

MARTHA: Will it do any good?

KURT (Softly, uncertain): The union—that's many people.

Not only does this scene suddenly plunge the play into moralistic bathos, it also greatly weakens Kroetz's pseudo-Marxist claptrap, constantly repeated in his "theoretical" writings in the book, that "capitalism" is hopelessly repressive, the police a mere tool of the big bosses and revolutionary change the only remedy. For suddenly we learn that the police will inform the union of the true facts and that the union is strong enough to stop the boss from victimizing the poor helpless proletarian!

The same somewhat simple-minded inability to see the reality of the West German scene beyond the smokescreen of pseudo-Marxist dogma pervades the whole book. In a number of articles Kroetz bitterly complains about the repressiveness of the German theatres and television channels, who prevent playwrights of his political persuasion from reaching the masses, while the blurb on the jacket and the eulogistic preface stress the fact that Kroetz is among the most frequently performed playwrights in West Germany and has reached millions through his television and radio scripts. Contemporary West Germany may have its ugly, cigar-smoking capitalists and nouveaux-riches, but nothing could be further from the truth than the idea that left-wing ideas are suppressed; on the contrary, a "Marxist" stance is almost compulsory if one wants to get access to the most reputable publishers or theatres. The repressiveness of capitalism in this respect exists mainly in misunderstood *Vulgär-Marxismus* on the part of talented but naïve young people like Kroetz.

And then: Kroetz never tires of stressing that his motivation in turning communist in his *Mitleid*, his compassion for suffering humanity. Yet in one of his political writings in the book, a reportage on cooperative agriculture in the GDR (based on tape-recorded interviews with members of cooperatives who, knowing that their views would be published and also knowing what would happen if such views were critical of the regime, gushed enthusiastically about the blessings of collective farming) he shows a less compassionate side. In talking about the process by which agriculture was collectivized—the land was first *given* to agricultural labourers and ten years later they were forced into collectives—Kroetz discusses those farmers who did not want to join the cooperatives—in theory a wholly voluntary decision:

> The struggle for the total collectivisation of agriculture lasted till 1960. Many could be persuaded, some also fled to the West; and there were also those who, when they realised that you could not escape the agricultural collectives, took a rope and hanged themselves. . . .

Compassion indeed! Reading this kind of writing one is forcefully reminded of that famous Nazi publication about prominent Jews, which after each biography of people like Einstein or Stefan Zweig added in brackets *Ungehängt*—"Not yet hanged".

Kroetz is very talented. But for real greatness as a writer more is needed than mere talent—a truly important writer must also have intelligence, insight and critical self-awareness. And that means knowing that compassion with suffering humanity also includes farmers who do not want to be forced to join a "voluntary" cooperative.

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On the side of Lucifer

By Sheila Stern

MAURICE B. BENN:
The Drama of Revolt
A Critical Study of Georg Büchner
321pp. Cambridge University Press. £7.50.

DAVID G. RICHARDS:
Georg Büchners Woyzeck
87pp. Bonn: Bouvier. DM13.50.

The author of a book on Georg Büchner must be a brave person. To be concerned with Büchner is for most modern readers to be drawn into a kind of intimacy that for a time excludes analysis or renders it disagreeable. The point where empathy ends and reasoned admiration begins seems to recede indefinitely; or we put it off for the sake of continuing the rare experience. At the other boundary, where we might expect this closeness to be disrupted by some stirring of critical opposition or protest of taste, we are halted by the one biographical fact that no critic can wholly ignore. A writer who dies at twenty-three does not abide our question; the rough draft or first glimpse of an achievement, however bold its lines, cannot give very much purchase to the dissecting instrument—it is a monolith, or it is nothing.

The determination and clear-headedness needed to escape from this uncritical state of mind, without abandoning the insights of deep affection, are the qualities of Maurice Benn's study of Büchner, *The Drama of Revolt*. Few words are wasted on the pathos of Büchner's swift extinction; it is sad to know that Professor Benn, who taught German in the University of Western Australia at Perth, did not live to see this book in print. He is intent upon arriving at a coherent account of the mind and its products, and the nature of this coherence is indicated by the title. Benn expresses disappointment at the absence of any mention of Büchner in Camus's *L'Homme révolté*; an odd omission, certainly, in a work notable for its wholesale enrolment of authors ancient and modern in the ranks of Lucifer (and all the odder for the fact that Camus *does* mention Georg's younger brother Ludwig, who wrote *Kraft und Stoff*). Some interesting discussion of Büchner in relation to Camus occurs in Wolfgang Martens's essay *Ideologie und Verzweiflung* (1965) and in Benn's book we find Camus's terms of political, metaphysical and aesthetic revolt applied to Büchner's writings.

The method is admirably thorough and the aptness of the categories generally striking. Büchner's early commitment to the idea of revolution was the motive of his first complete piece of writing, the subversive pamphlet *Der Hessische Landbote* in which he collaborated with Ludwig Weidig, a clergyman in his forties who was to die a martyr's death in prison for his political beliefs. A few months after the pamphlet was printed Büchner completed *Dantons Tod* (1835) in about five weeks. Perhaps the easiest way to explain Büchner's modern reputation to the curious is to point out that in an age of intense concern with the drama, nobody else but this twenty-one-year-old natural scientist succeeded in writing a play about the French Revolution. The dramatic form, derived from some Sturm und Drang models but far surpassing them in imaginative intensity and power, is a brilliant solution to the problem of giving historical figures a private dimension.

Büchner was cruel in his attacks on the historical dramas of Schiller; *Dantons Tod* gives him the right to be. Benn bases most of his argument in the section on aesthetic revolt upon this attitude to Schiller, but adds that it was also an example of political revolt.

This he says is the only way to describe Büchner's response to the classical idealization of Weimar, with its tendency to veil or ignore the ordinary life of humble people; the early Romantic revolt of Goethe and Schiller was all to be begun again after 1789, more soundly and matured. (*His study does not*, of course, touch upon this large subject, but we may recall an entry in a notebook Goethe kept in his teens which is singularly close to Büchner's *Woyzeck*; an anecdote about a soldier demanding arrears of pay from the captain he waits on, saying "Mein Geld muss ich haben, Herr Hauptmann, oder ich pisse in die Stub'n"—"I must have my money, sir, or I shall piss in your room".)

When, very soon after this, we find Benn writing, "but Büchner's aesthetic revolt is also clearly related to his metaphysical revolt", *we are aware of a difficulty arising* from the categories he has chosen and experienced whenever Büchner fails to confine himself to one mode of revolt at a time. Perhaps the reader will feel that the revolt is *all of a piece, at least more so than* this framework allows it to be. The insistence that Büchner was a revolutionary as well as revolutionary is part of the problem. It is surely wishful thinking, for instance, to cite the sonorous preaching of *Der Hessische Landbote* as an example of "incomparably tougher methods" (than mere didacticism in literature) "for the accomplishment of revolutions".

Another problem of categories arises when Benn tries to affix a single label to Büchner's principal heroes, Danton, Woyzeck and Lenz (in the novelle of that name, based on the winter journey into the Vosges of the playwright J. M. R. Lenz in 1778, when he was befriended by Pastor Oberlin). All three are in exemplify that rejection of individual guilt that is inherent in the idea of metaphysical revolt. We are entirely with Maurice Benn in feeling Lenz and Woyzeck to be cruelly unfree and essentially innocent victims of fate, and a friendless wanderer on the brink of insanity and the other caught in a personal and social trap. But Danton? "Nowhere", says Mr. Benn, "is the revolting injustice of their fate more evident than in the sense of guilt that torments them even when they are guiltless, even when their 'crime' has been inevitable."

But Danton will not accommodate himself to this description. The claim that he is guiltless seems to me entirely Benn's own, not Büchner's, in support of it he quotes Danton's exchange with Julie about the September massacres, ending "Wir mussten"—"We had to do it". But this is not a claim to innocence: it is the anguished turning of his mind about the circumstances in which guilt was incurred.

Other elements, truly metaphysical, enter into Büchner's presentation of Danton's tragedy, but the acknowledgment of guilt is vital to it. His weariness of spirit is often expressed very like that of Lenz and of the hero of Büchner's comedy *Leonce und Lena* (a royal cousin of Hal in the first part of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*), but in Danton it is less an idiosyncrasy of temperament or a genuine *acédie*, much more a motivated longing for peace and for the end of intolerable self-reproach.

Maurice Benn's argument is probably most strikingly successful in connection with *Woyzeck*, where he demonstrates from the three different manuscript versions plus two *scenes*) that Büchner progressively increased the emphasis on poverty as the principal source of Woyzeck's tragedy. The dehumanizing and unfeeling treatment Woyzeck receives from the doctor who uses him as a *guinea-pig* (as the chemist Liebig had used private soldiers in Giessen while Büchner was living there), and from the captain he waits upon, is endured for the sake of small weekly payments with *which he helps to support his mistress* and their child. The word *Geld*, it seems, occurs not at all in the earlier drafts and eight times in the last. These and similar points enable the author to put a strong *case for regarding the political* statement as of equal importance with the human, almost cosmic theme in *Woyzeck*.

Mr Benn has little difficulty in going on to show the play as exemplifying aesthetic revolt too—its form is even more startling than its subject-matter, given the date. Büchner's few German predecessors in the "open" drama included Goethe and J. M. R. Lenz, but this discontinuous dialogue, the speakers hardly communicating with each other but always revealing their inner selves in the harsh vocabulary of stress, is his own. We may be less convinced by the demonstration of metaphysical revolt, perhaps because there is little acknowledgment of the fact that, like all Büchner's main characters, Woyzeck seems to have had his mind formed by constant reading in the Bible. The crime he commits could very well be assigned in part to a familiar form of religious obsession in which the sufferer supposes himself commanded to be God's instrument in destroying a sinner. That this theme, patent in some of the quasi-religious statements of Robespierre and St Just in *Dantons Tod*, has not found much currency among interpreters of *Woyzeck* is, I think, because critics are understandably influenced by the real crime of the real Woyzeck, executed in Leipzig in 1824; the extensive documents about his state of mind only faintly suggest that this man may have identified himself with divine retributive purpose.

But the Woyzeck of the play is both explicit about this and, more subtly, constantly reverting to biblical phrase and image, darkly prophetic of the sinner's doom that is to envelop his victim first and then himself. This tends to weaken Maurice Benn's case, for the effect is to heighten our sense of pity and make the mood of revolt somewhat remote. Part of Benn's main thesis is his insistence on Büchner's atheism as a constant. This insistence does not prevent him from recognizing as Christian Büchner's equally fundamental love of his fellow men, but it seems to be the cause of his reluctance to admit that the Bible is the rock underlying Büchner's world.

This is an element given more attention in the brief *Georg Büchner's Woyzeck*, by David Richards of the State University of New York at Buffalo. Professor Richards considers that Büchner in the course of his revisions gradually arrived at a far deeper and more tragic characterization of Marie than he had earlier had in mind, and instances the scene where she consults the Bible for support and finds only despair. Like Benn, this critic traces an increased emphasis on the economic motive in the stages of the manuscript; but he refuses to place the responsibility of the *catastrophe on unscrupulous doctors* or captains; Woyzeck and Marie, according to Professor Richards, are in the mercy of a greater and more relentless power than society, and we must see *nature as their tragic fate.*

There exists a foregoing or ongoing controversy between Richards and Professor W. Lehmann of Hamburg as to the arrangement of a definitive *Woyzeck* text for performance. The significance of this is that it is part of Büchner's peculiar destiny to be directly accountable for a number of misconceived plays and productions in our own day. What Maurice Benn calls the "spare, concentrated, economical" (and incomplete) *Woyzeck* gives rise to the modern German fashion for "documented" and evolutionary works in which everyone who was alive in 1800 is seen to have been meritoriously implicated in the French Revolution. The temptation to arrange Büchner's own play in some brand-new perspective has not always been resisted and it is clearly important to establish as sound a text as possible. After a fine critical appraisal Professor Richards arrives at a definitive order of scenes.

The sensation of something being pushed too far is not entirely lacking in either of these books on Büchner. Richards sometimes writes as though Woyzeck were a musical crescendo, and dramatic tension as measurable as music. Yet without this hum of bees, bonnets, of axes being ground, there would perhaps be no critical approach to this subject at all. It becomes very evident in Büchner's monolithic quality it poses on the critic the need to see how to carve out a foothold, a point of view from which it is afterwards difficult to achieve much freedom of movement.

Maurice Benn's profound preoccupation with the theme of social injustice and its connexion with literature are movingly expressed in his book. Perhaps the boldest statement of the beliefs that unite it with its chosen subject is the conclusion of his chapter on Wagner where he attempts to define Büchner's synthesis of the institutional and the human, the necessity of evil and the necessity of combating evil, "a pessimistic world-view and a progressive social and political activism". These pages must make us recall two brief passages from Büchner that are almost like flashes of lightning in the memory—one a letter from Strasbourg, New Year Day 1836:

> *I have just* been at the Cathedral Market: everywhere crowds of ragged, shivering children, staring with wide-open eyes and pale faces in front of all the storehouses made of water and flour; rubbish and gold paper. It is enough for most people even the poorest pleasures and enjoyments are unattainable luxuries, makes me very bitter.

The *other* is Lenz's reply after Oberlin has explained the Christian view of divine rewards and punishments: "Aber ich, wir ihr allmächtig, sehen Sie, ich könnte das Leiden nicht ertragen—ich würde retten, retten." ("But I, if I were all-powerful, you see, I wouldn't be able to bear the suffering—I should save, save.")

The question remains whether these two quotations (used, in different contexts, by Benn himself) really add up to "a pessimistic world-view and a progressive social and political activism", and whether we can bear to use these labels at all, even as a filing system or *aide-mémoire*, in connection with these luminous words.

Frank Trommler's daunting task in *Sozialistische Literatur in Deutschland* (846pp. Stuttgart: Kröner, DM 28.50) is to chart the shifting loyalties of writers and intellectuals to the socialist movement in Germany, the interests and cultural activities of the political organizations, and their interactions from 1830 to the present. He distinguishes five major thematic complexes: the development of German literature "with its belated and hesitant turn towards social reality"; the waning revolutionary stance of the German working class; how the process of modernization (especially visible in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) was or was not assimilated by society; indirectly related to this, the "aestheticisation of politics" through the new media of communication and reproduction; and lastly, but paramount for Germany, the "political activation of nationalism". Trommler's approach is shamelessly *empirical and his* course correspondingly free of theoretico-ideological overkill.

The penalties of emancipation

By David Blackbourn

REINHARD RÜRUP:
Emanzipation und Antisemitismus
208pp. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht. DM28.

Over thirty years ago A. J. P. Taylor coined the memorably provocative phrase that in 1848 "German history reached its turning point and failed to turn". German history's sins of omission continue to exercise historians, although they are now largely recounted without moral stricture. The most important events in this history before 1933 still often appear to be those which did not occur: the failure of German thinking to embrace a rational cosmopolitanism; the failure of political liberalism; and the failure of "modernization" generally, except in the economic sphere. Two excellent recent works on the German peace movement (by Roger Chickering) and on German feminism (by Richard J. Evans) highlight this historiographical tendency. In both cases the success of the study lies in demonstrating the failure of its subject.

Reinhard Rürup's book concentrates on Jewish emancipation and the rise of modern antisemitism in Germany. It is a collection of six essays (five of them previously published) and owes its unity to a central postulate. The fitful movement towards Jewish emancipation in Germany between 1780 and 1870 was, he argues, closely bound up with the wider development of bourgeois liberalism. It was the successes and, in the long run, the failures of this movement which determined the fate of emancipation, rather than developments within the Jewish community itself or the negative acts of the emancipationists. With the collapse of bourgeois liberalism in the 1870s under the impact of the Great Depression, the fragile achievement of emancipation was, in turn, exposed to a virulently new, post-emancipatory antisemitism. The Jew became a victim because he was a supreme symbol of everything that was liberal and "modern" in the uncertain society of the new Germany, a scapegoat for the anxieties of the middle class (especially the educated Bildungsbürgertum) and for the resentments of struggling peasant and lower-middle-class groups at a time of economic crisis.

While some of this ground is fairly familiar, Rürup argues his case for the most part with subtlety, backed up by a weighty *apparatus criticus* (the actual text of the essays occupies only 132 pages). A major strength of the work lies in its interweaving of the history of ideas with an understanding of the social, political and institutional forces which conditioned their development. The author is by no means content to trace the emergence of the "Jewish question" in the writings of major figures like Humboldt, Schleiermacher and Marx, but considers also its treatment in official memoranda and in important contemporary reference books like those of Brockhaus, Rotteck and Welcker, Bluntschli and Brater. The value of this approach is particularly evident in the essays on emancipation—a general survey, a case study of Baden, and a short postscript on the origins, background and ambiguities of the term. Rürup shows *that the dominant* concept of emancipation—certainly up to 1848—was not the one established by the French Revolution, that the Jew should receive full civil equality as of right, but the enlightened absolutist concept elaborated by state officials in Austria, Prussia, Baden and elsewhere. The interests of the state dictated a policy of Jewish emancipation as part of a broader attempt to free society and economy from feudal, corporate and religious restrictions; but emancipation was viewed as a process not an act, and had to be "earned" by evidence from the Jewish community itself of assimilation in matters of education, occupation, and so on.

The liberal movement acquiesced in this view of emancipation (as it acquiesced in other aspects of the state's revolution from above). This had a number of adverse effects. The step-by-step approach to emancipation, coupled with the requirement that it be "earned", *fostered anti-Jewish prejudice.* At the same time emancipation preceded unevenly from state to state, again allowing its opponents to use comparative statistics to allege the undesirability of its *effects. Perhaps most important*, Rürup points out that Jews were gradually admitted to equality of citizenship within a society which in many other important respects remained effectively unemancipated. *Why, it was commonly if hyperbolically* argued, should Jews receive what was denied to downtrodden Catholics or the bureaucratically repressed municipalities of the south? The problem of Jewish *emancipation within a generally unemancipated society*, a byproduct of what Rürup identifies as the general weakness of the bourgeois liberal movement in Germany, was already a source of real resentment before the 1870s.

Rürup nevertheless argues that antisemitism after that time was something new. In an essay written jointly with Thomas Nipperdey he has reconstructed how the term antisemitism entered the political vocabulary in 1879, and he stresses the important shift in emphasis involved in the transition from hostility towards a religiously defined Jewish "nation" to the racial antisemitism of the post-emancipation period, underpinned by the pseudo-scientific findings of philologists and anthropologists.

Following Hans Rosenberg (who is generously acknowledged) and others, the author sees the new antisemitism as an outcome of the economic depression of the 1870s. Depression hastened the demise of liberalism, discredited liberal capitalism along with the ideas of competition, mobility and emancipation with which it was identified, and instituted a search for scapegoats. Antisemitism, like the return to protective tariffs and the purging of *liberals from the bureaucracy*, was part of a general shift to the right.

This part of the book generally advances our understanding less than the essays dealing with emancipation. The finely differentiated treatment of the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s contrasts with the blunt instrument taken to later decades. Can one, for example, view the Great Depression years (1873-96) as a unity? Was it not the 1890s rather than the 1870s which saw the most important advance of antisemitism, as it became institutionalized in organizations like the Agrarian and Pan-German Leagues? Connected with this is a sociological problem. It would be helpful to have a clearer breakdown of the different social groups which at different times and for different reasons provided antisemitism with its mass support. It seems likely, for example, that the earliest support came from artisans and parts of the professional middle class, and it was later that significant numbers of white-collar workers and shopkeepers (both rapidly *growing groups* in the 1870s and 1880s) added their support.

In the case of shopkeepers, especially, it was not so much the depression of the 1870s but the period around the turn of the century which was decisive, when the competition of consumer cooperatives and "Jewish" department stores began to bite.

There is a further question here which the author does not go into in his analysis of the social roots and function of antisemitism. This concerns the difference between town and country. While it is surely right to see urban antisemitism as embodying novel elements, rural antisemitism showed a clear continuity with earlier anti-Jewish sentiment. Well before the 1870s the demonology attaching to the Jew in rural areas was of the "*modern*" variety: the Jew was attacked not for his religion but because he was identified with the parasitical liberal sophisticates of the city; not because (as traditional anti-emancipationists insisted) he *was poor and incapable*, but because he was allegedly rich and educationally privileged. This was little different from rural antisemitism in the later period. Nor did the antagonism towards *the Jewish grain or cattle dealer* in Catholic areas often encouraged by the local priest—change much between the 1840s and the 1890s.

What did change, of course, was the political setting: the mobilization of such resentments by the parties of the right. Again, though, this was largely a feature of the 1890s rather than the 1870s, and the process by which it took place is one to which the author might legitimately have devoted more space when dealing with the period after 1870. A closer look at this process would also have allowed him to examine more critically a *feature of antisemitism* which has acquired considerable importance in the historiography of the subject, but is dealt with here rather cursorily: the extent to which antisemitism was used as a weapon of political manipulation by illiberal and anti-liberal interests.

This is nevertheless a significant contribution to a debate which, as the useful bibliography indicates, has long concerned more than Jewish history alone. Reinhard Rürup has boldly set out to plot the move towards emancipation and the emergence of modern antisemitism against the broad background of Central European society in the nineteenth century. In doing so he has illuminated particularly the important and ambiguous role played by the state and the complementary weakness of bourgeois liberalism.

The citizens' president

By Ernest K. Bramsted

GUSTAV W. HEINEMANN:
Reden und Schriften
Volume 1: Allen Bürgern verpflichtet. 339pp
Volume 2: Glaubensfreiheit-Bürgerfreiheit. 330pp
Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM 36 each.

The third president of the Federal Republic of Germany was a man with a refreshing aversion to pomposity and official showmanship. Significantly, Gustav Heinemann once remarked that he loved his wife, but he did not love the state. While he liked to see himself as a "citizens' president", his biographer has called him "the awkward president", perhaps because he did not always say what many expected from him, and because he disliked cant.

A lawyer by training and for many years an adviser to a steel firm in Essen, he was from his thirteenth year a devout Protestant, much influenced by the theology of Karl Barth. Early in the Third Reich he joined the ranks of Pastor Niemöller's "Confessional Church" and sponsored its "Barmer Declaration", which drew a clear demarcation line between the message of the Gospel and the claims of the totalitarian state. In 1945 he was one of the fathers of the "Stuttgart Declaration", issued by the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany and emphasizing both "the community of suffering" and "the consciousness of (collective) guilt".

As Lord Mayor of Essen he became a founder member of the CDU in the Rhineland and entered politics. He began on a regional level as a deputy and was later a Minister of Justice in the Land North-Rhine-Westphalia, and then became Minister of the Interior in Dr. Adenauer's first Federal Cabinet. But a year afterwards, in 1950, he resigned from his post as he objected to German rearmament and to the one-sided integration of the Federal Republic. He then still hoped for a peaceful German reunification.

In 1952 he left the CDU and joined a small neutralist party which proved a failure. To the dismay of many Christians, Heinemann joined the Social Democrats in 1957 and re-entered the Bonn Diet as a member of their party. By then the SPD had dropped its traditional anti-clericalism and Heinemann was able to draft the more positive section on the party's attitude to religion and the churches in its new Godesberg Programme. Soon afterwards, in a speech in the Diet, he criticized Adenauer's *statement to the Pope* that God had given the German people a special task to be a guardian of the West against the powerful influence of the East. Heinemann felt uneasy about this new idea of a German *mission*, a phrase reminiscent of the Hitler time.

Later, as Federal Minister of Justice in the Kiesinger-Brandt "Great Coalition" he carried out long-overdue reforms of the criminal law and removed the legal discrimination against illegitimate children. Heinemann's election by a small majority as Federal President in 1969 was to prove the overture to the first Socialist-Liberal coalition government under Brandt and Scheel.

The two volumes of Heinemann's *major addresses and writings were* completed shortly before his death in June 1976. The first contains a selection of his presidential addresses between 1969 and 1974, the second a collection of major speeches *and essays on church, state and society* after 1945. Together they enable the reader to gain a clearer picture of the development of his thinking.

Heinemann lacked the agreeable urbanity and sceptical wit of Theodor Heuss, the first Federal president, but he impresses by his open-minded seriousness, his lucidity of expression and ability to expound complicated issues. He opposed *any state idolatry and the reverence* of authority as such that was so prevalent in Germany between 1871 and 1945.

Heinemann remained critical of the close affiliation in German history between the territorial states and the Christian churches. He deplored the far-reaching consequences of Luther's conservative outlook on social and political issues as well as the lack in Germany of that nonconformity which he says, as a distinguished Lausanne professor of religious life in Britain, Ho insisted that Germans "must not eliminate the adverse, the disquieting, not even the criminal elements in their history".

Looking back in 1971 to Bismarck's creation of the Second Empire, his comment was: "A hundred years of German history means Versailles not only once but twice, and also Auschwitz, Stalingrad and the Unconditional Surrender in 1945." Speaking on another occasion of the sacrifice of the resistors of July 20, 1944, he found that "a good German cannot be a nationalist. A nationally conscious German can only be an European." He sympathized with the lost causes of rebels and radicals in Germany's past, with the rebellious peasants of 1525 and with the rebels in Baden against Prussian troops in 1849. Over 5,000 people left Germany. Among them were some of Heinemann's ancestors on his mother's side; one of whom in the end preferred the freedom of the United States to the tyranny of German reaction.

As the highest functionary of the Republic, Heinemann made contact with and acquired insight into a great variety of regions, classes *and occupations. He became aware* of the problems of the underprivileged and the handicapped and of the different attitudes of the generations. From his politically neutral platform he spoke to scientists and civil servants, architects and sportsmen, to refugees and to the police. Heinemann liked to mix with the young and showed more understanding of the radicals among them than most politicians, *but he also admonished them to* appreciate fairness and tolerance.

This modern *praeceptor Germaniae* disapproved of the use of the adjective "Christian" in the labels of political parties, but equally desired that Christians should play their role in politics. He said so far from a sense of religious responsibility. Heinemann thought constantly in both theological and socio-political terms. The church was to him equally "God's own work" and a social institution much dependent on political structures. To the end he maintained that "a man with God was still in a *majority*" and favoured "a relative Utopia" trying to work towards a better world by a policy of small but determined steps.

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The Life and Death of the Afrika Korps

207pp. Batsford. £5.50.

In 1968 Ronald Lewin wrote *Rommel As Military Commander*, followed three years later by *Montgomery As Military Commander*. To complete the trilogy, we now have *The Life and Death of the Afrika Korps*. The Afrika Korps was the instrument of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel which he personally forged and used, during two momentous years, to defeat and humiliate a great army of our country and Commonwealth—and thereby all but gave victory to Hitler in the Second World War. It is not necessary to read the two previous volumes in order to enjoy this book, which tells the story of a German army, as seen by the Germans themselves, their commanders, officers and soldiers in the ranks. We are also told what they thought of us, our leaders and our men, our strategy, tactics, and morale, in the British and Commonwealth formations of 8th Army.

The author tells us there were only three major forces during the Second World War that had what he calls "a binding unity", similar to that which holds together a tribe or close-knit family. Two British armies and one German army had this unity—Montgomery's 8th Army, Slim's 14th Army, and Rommel's Afrika Korps (Deutsches Afrika Korps, short title DAK). No other armies of any nation had this sense of identity and self-awareness, strong enough not only to survive defeat and go on to victory, but also to continue in the aftermath of peace; furthermore, no army could achieve this state without being closely identified with the personality and skill of its commander. Montgomery, Slim and Rommel were commanders of this category, though their methods were wholly dissimilar.

Slim was "Uncle Bill", binding all men to himself by his humanity, utter honesty, his friendly calm and humour. Montgomery ensured complete trust in himself, he guaranteed victory and always got it, his men knew that by his knowledge, skill and training he was master of his trade, and therefore they were as safe as possible in his hands. Rommel's methods were quite different, Teutonic, yet equally effective for DAK. He was their ideal soldier, energetic and tireless, resourceful and always up in front, leading his men—a stern disciplinarian, yet never unjust.

Mr Lewin shows how DAK fought each battle with a preconceived tactical doctrine, designed by Rommel to suit the topographical (mainly desert) conditions. The basis of this doctrine lay in the use of holding forces who manned vital, but static, defence localities, which an opponent could not afford to bypass, while very strong armoured troops, supported by anti-tank guns, engineers and motorized infantry, formed the spearhead for all offensive operations. Rommel always insisted that armoured troops and artillery should fight concentrated, *en masse*, never in small detachments: the force which brought him such success was a Panzer Corps, consisting of three divisions—15 Panzer Division, 21 Panzer Division and 90 Light Division.

In this context Monty often told me that, even before he reached Egypt, he had decided Rommel's desert tactics were absolutely right, and 8th Army's tactical doctrine correspondingly wrong. The day he arrived in Cairo he had arranged with General Harding (then DCIGS to Auchinleck and now Field Marshal Lord Harding) to raise an army corps, consisting of three armoured divisions, and the New Zealand division of motorized infantry and an armoured brigade. Later he entered in his diary for that day:

> I have reached the conclusion that 8th Army must have its own Panzer Army—a corps *strong in armour, well equipped*, and well trained. Because of the lack of such a corps we had never done any lasting good. The formation of this corps of three or four divisions must be a priority task.

This statement poses a question. Was it the example of Rommel that made us copy his tactics and improve on them, and thus gain victory, bearing in mind that from Alamein onwards we had the advantage in numbers, and in quality, of tanks? My brother had been in France in 1940 and seen the great German offensive across the Meuse, with seven armoured *divisions led by Von Rundstedt*, heading for the English Channel.

When all is said and done, DAK successes were primarily due to Rommel's leadership, so well expressed by his Chief of Intelligence, von Mellenthin, who is quoted by Mr Lewin as saying:

> Between Rommel and his troops there was mutual understanding which cannot be explained and analysed, but which is the gift of the gods. The Afrika Korps followed Rommel wherever he led, however hard he drove them . . . they saw him in their midst and they felt, "This is our leader".

Many readers of this book will already have studied this long campaign, or have taken part in it, with personal knowledge of the responsibility and performance of the commanders involved. They will be interested to see that Rommel clearly believed he would succeed; and so he did, as long as the British persisted in fighting the desert battle with the outlook of the horsed cavalry commander, with small independent brigade groups. Then one day a new British general appeared. He was very different from any of his predecessors, and certainly unlike any *German commander DAK had seen* or heard of. "Short of stature, rather odd, wearing hats covered with regimental badges, and given to issuing Godly Messages of the Day, but unmistakable, unforgettable and unbeatable", is Mr Lewin's description. General Bernard Montgomery had arrived to command 8th Army. From that moment DAK was confronted by an opponent who believed in the principle of concentration of force, and fought with his armour and artillery employed *en masse*, with heavy bombers of the Desert Air Force directed against tactical targets.

Mr Lewin reminds us that Rommel made some very obvious mistakes, and that Hitler compounded these errors by failure or inability to support Rommel logistically, particularly with petrol, food and ammunition. Especially interesting is Rommel's failure to capture Tobruk one year sooner than he did—due to his insistence on leading his men personally to the front line at squadron and company level. Early in April Rommel, intent on the capture of Mechili, had lost touch with headquarters, where his staff appreciated that Tobruk was lightly defended and could be taken on the run. When at last Rommel was contacted it was too late; if Tobruk had been captured then there would have been no Alamein. 8th Army was short of every *thing, the 2nd American tanks* not available for another month and DAK, with Tobruk captured, could have swept the British before them and taken possession of Egypt and the Suez Canal.

The author deals finally with DAK's defeat ("Decision at Alamein" he calls it) and the long pursuit that followed, culminating in the great battle for the Mareth Line in Tunis. For Afrika Korps the end was in sight. "Short of hours and physically in poor condition", left Africa on March 9, 1943; the finale of the cherished Afrika Korps came to an end in April when 150,000 Germans surrendered at Tunis. *Reading* this absorbing book makes it easy for us to understand why "Lily Marlene" became as it were a bond between the opposing armies. The magnificent courage, valour and determination of the men on each side were equal and never failed.

The low standing army

By G. M. Wilson

H. C. B. ROGERS :

The British Army of the Eighteenth Century

252pp. Allen and Unwin. £6.50.

For fifty-three years of the eighteenth century the British army was fighting someone in some part of the world and in general it achieved successes out of all proportion to its size. Certainly the growing wealth and influence of Britain at this time was due far more to the successes of the army in far-off lands than the majority of Georgian squires would have *liked to believe. For throughout* the eighteenth century, but more especially in the earlier years, the army was regarded with great suspicion. Many saw it as a threat to the liberties enshrined in the constitutional settlement of the Glorious Revolution. Indeed for much of the eighteenth century it was not even recognized that Britain had a standing army. In peacetime the army was theoretically still a temporary institution, relying for its continued existence upon the passing of the yearly Mutiny Acts by Parliament, the debate on which provided an annual forum for the airing of grievances against the army and for demanding its reduction or its total *abolition*.

In such adverse political conditions it was very difficult for it to act efficiently. Whenever war seemed possible, the government made efforts to strengthen the army, but as soon as the danger had passed drastic cuts were made in its strength, leaving many regiments with little more than a skeleton organization. In such circumstances proper training programmes were difficult to organize, especially when the opponents of a "standing" army were calling for its abolition and replacement by a well-organized militia.

But lack of manpower was not the only factor which reduced the army's efficiency. Fear of the army led to a dislike of its being concentrated in one place. As General Wade wrote in 1739-40: "The people of this Kingdom have been taught to associate the idea of barracks and slavery so closely together that, like darkness and the devil, though there be no connection between them, yet they cannot separate them, *nor think of the* one without thinking at the same time of the other." So the British army had to be scattered throughout the countryside, with no base or depot system whatsoever, and inevitably discipline and efficiency suffered considerably. Yet another factor which severely hampered the army was a direct result of parliamentary fear of it, for Parliament so arranged the army command that no single person was able to raise, organize and move a field force.

Seen against this background the successes of the British army in the eighteenth century seem little short of miraculous and H. C. B. Rogers in his latest book contends forcefully and quite justifiably that these successes were a result of the professional skill of the officers and men, which has both then and now been at best underrated and at worst held in contempt. The first part of *The British Army of the Eighteenth Century* deals with the organization and administration of the army in the unfavourable social and political climate. The author probably underestimates both the evils of the purchase system of promotion and the rigours of discipline and corporal punishment, but in general he has written a simple, concise summary which is an ideal introduction to the subject.

The second part of the book deals with strategy and tactics. In a mere 146 pages Colonel Rogers could not hope to survey all the campaigns and engagements of the period and instead he has sensibly restricted himself to selected examples. In the section on strategy he deals, inevitably, with the Duke of Marlborough, and more interestingly with Sir Jeffery Amherst and Sir William Howe. Amherst is a much neglected figure who has been overshadowed in the popular imagination by the more romantic and spectacular General Wolfe. But it was Amherst who masterminded the conquest of Canada and who issued Wolfe with his orders, and there is some reason for believing that Wolfe's costly victory at Quebec was both unnecessary and wasteful. The reputation of Sir William Howe has suffered like that of all British generals involved in the American War of Independence, for few people seem willing to believe that they all found themselves in an impossible situation. But by day he was the most popular and widely respected general in the British army, and it is Colonel Rogers's contention that he was also one of the most able, and that his strategy during the Philadelphia campaign and his overriding aim of defeating the American armies by destroying the only one which might have snatched victory from the jaws of almost inevitable defeat.

To describe the tactics of the British army, Colonel Rogers has chosen Marlborough's victory at Ramillies and the Duke of Cumberland's defeat by Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy, which Corelli Barnett has called "the kind of battle British military writers always enjoy describing", with little plan of attack but as a centrepiece a steady march under converging fire to and from the enemy camp by the British infantry; "a tactically meaningless display of extreme fortitude and discipline". But of far more interest than both these two battles are Colonel Rogers's descriptions of Cornwallis's victories at Camden and Guildford during the American War of Independence, victories which show the great quality and adaptability which enabled the British army to achieve so much success in colonial warfare.

As an introduction to British military history of the eighteenth century this book has much to recommend it. Colonel Rogers writes in a lucid and vigorous style which commands attention and stimulates interest. His opinions are always stated clearly and forcefully and he sometimes overestimates the abilities of the officers of the British army, it is a natural reaction to the tendency to dismiss many of them as incompetent nonentities, who achieved their positions by wealth and not ability. It is only a pity that some of the pictures used to illustrate the uniforms and equipment are inaccurate nineteenth-century representations.

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Bitter cold it was

By A. A. White

BRIAN S. JOHN :

The Ice Age, Past and Present

254pp. Collins. £4.95.

Brian S. John has chosen to write about Ice Ages for "the person who knows very little about ice and glaciers and even less about the Ice Age". About half of the book deals with the behaviour and geological importance of glaciers, ice sheets, sea ice and permafrost. The remainder covers the Ice Ages of the geological past, with particular emphasis on the present Ice Age and its effects on plants, animals and the evolution of man. There is frequent discussion also of the intimate relation between climate and the extent of glaciation. By attempting to cover such a wide range of aspects, Dr John (who is a glaciologist) has bravely accepted the challenge of venturing into some fields in which he has not specialized; and, incidentally, thrown down the gauntlet to anyone who would review his book.

One of the attractions, and pitfalls, of environmental science is *its interdisciplinary character*. Most natural systems on Earth require for their full understanding a confluence of biological, chemical, physical and mathematical expertise. Of course, few scientists can aspire to possess all these skills, and a more realistic aim is competence in one field and acquaintance with the others.

In any book with a broad scope, limitations on space may make it difficult to tell the whole truth, and the ideal must then be to tell nothing but the truth. According to this criterion, Dr John's book must be rated highly. Specialists in some fields may detect the occasional dubious statement, but the overall impression is that a remarkable conciseness has been achieved, and at the expense of cutting only a few corners.

The Ice Age, Past and Present is beautifully illustrated with black-*and-white plates, figures* and diagrams. A mystifying shortcoming is the infrequency of reference to these illustrations. The plates, indeed, are not referred to at all in the text, although they are listed and indexed. This is not to imply that the text is inadequate, for, nearly without exception, explanations and arguments are presented lucidly and directly.

Only in a short section on dating techniques in geology are unreasonable assumptions made about the reader's knowledge. The techniques themselves are described clearly enough, but the absence of a paragraph or so on the rationale of stratigraphy means that anyone without a geological background may be left confused.

In discussing the vexed question of the causes of the various climatic fluctuations the author largely avoids the temptation of rooting for one particular theory, choosing instead to describe some of the mechanisms which have been proposed. Bearing in mind the cynic's First Law of Climatology—that the number of theories is equal to the number of climatologists—it would be difficult to describe all the mechanisms. However, more consideration of the role of the deep ocean circulations, which may be important in producing climatic fluctuations with a characteristic time of the order of centuries, would have given a more comprehensive picture of the range of opinion in this field. Climatologists will savour a notable inconsistency in the text (resulting, perhaps, from loose definition of terms): on page 131 it is stated aphoristically that "The world's climate is persistently unstable", but on page 227 there is talk of "the gigantic *stability of the global climate* machine".

One of the best aspects of the book is the author's lively and discriminating style. His enthusiasm for the subject of ice frequently erupts into humour (other writers on scientific subjects please note), some of the section headings and the chapter on primitive man in the Ice Age being particularly stimulating. It is pleasing also to see occasional comments on the euphony, or cacophony, of geological terms. The author's reminiscences about expeditions to icy places provide further light relief.

The layout and general production of the book are good. A querulous eye may count about a score of misprints, but this is probably not bad going for a first edition, and none of them mislends. Neither is the transposition of the captions on plate 32 likely to cause widespread confusion of Antarctica and the carbon dioxide ice cap on Mars.

On the dust-cover are advertised Stamp's *Britain's Structure and Scenery* and Darling and Boyd's *The Highlands and Islands*. John's *The Ice Ages, Past and Present* may well soon be counted alongside these classic environmental works. What is certain is that it represents good value for money.

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Come into my garden

By S. Peter Dance

ROY GENDERS :

Wildlife in the Garden

264pp. Faber. £4.75.

MICHAEL CHINERY :

The Natural History of the Garden

287pp. Collins. £4.50.

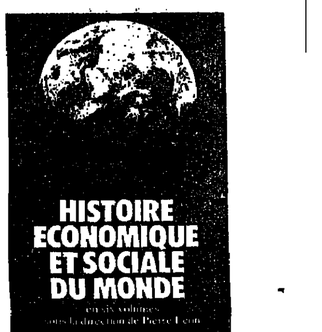
Roy Genders's *Wildlife in the Garden* seems to have one objective in view—in my opinion the wrong objective—and that is to do everything possible to attract wild creatures into the garden and then to watch them perform. To this end its author describes the shrubs and trees which attract birds, gives detailed instructions on how to construct nest boxes and bird tables, shows how to organize a butterfly garden and a bee garden and lists the night-scented flowers which will attract moths.

As a guide to some of the creatures we may expect to see in our gardens Roy Genders is informative if not very engaging, and often he is over-optimistic. For instance, his list of sixty-two butterfly species—rather more than the number of *resident* British species—includes the rare forest dwelling Purple Emperor and the Mountain Ringlet, a likely visitor to all gardens on Ben Nevis and some other places up north above 1,500 feet, but not elsewhere. Neither of them would find the author's butterfly garden inviting unless it included oak trees, mat grass and rotting animal corpses. The drawings in this rather unattractive book, of butterflies especially, are poor and the photos, though competent, are too few to be useful.

Gardens are full of plants and animals which arrive and settle in without asking permission, and the purpose of Michael Chinery's *The Natural History of the Garden*, as the preface tells us, "is to enable the gardener to recognise some of the commoner and more obvious of these guests and invaders, to help him or her to know why the creatures have chosen to live where they do, and to explain what they are doing there". Because of the varied nature of our gardens and the enormous area they cover—collectively about 670,000 acres in Britain alone—they are important reservoirs of wild life, and even town gardens may be surprisingly rich in unlimited plants and animals.

With the aid of Michael Chinery's admirably balanced, always accurate, readable and systematically arranged text we may fully appreciate the wild flora and fauna of our gardens. The twenty-four plates in full colour and the many exquisite drawings in the text enable us to identify a *large number of the plants and* animals discussed in the book. Whether he is writing about fairy-ring toadstools or false scorpions the author always has something worthwhile to say and says it well. His chapter on weeds and other plant guests, one of the most interesting in the book, shows that he is at home with plants as well as with animals.

There are short chapters on birds and on mammals; but it is difficult to say anything new about bird visitors, and very few wild mammals are seen in gardens anyway. Wisely the author has devoted more than half the book to insects and other invertebrates, a proportion which reflects their relative abundance in gardens as well as their prominent place in his affections. As the author of the best-selling *Field Guide to the Insects of Britain*, Michael Chinery has already proved that his knowledge of entomology is profound and wide-ranging. *In the Natural History of the Garden*, a much more discursive book, he conveys technical or obscure information in a way that makes it much easier for the non-specialist to assimilate. With deceptive ease, too, he spices his text with useful snippets of economically interesting information. He explains how the widespread use of DDT in the 1940s resulted in the previously innocuous spider mite becoming a major pest in fruit-growing areas, and why British potato growers, anxious to avoid virus infections in their crops, get their seed potatoes from Scotland or Ireland where, because of the climate, the virus-spreading greenfly is absent. Even the roundworms (or nematodes), just about the most abundant and most undistinguished of all animals, do not leave him stumped for a thought-provoking comment. "It has been said that if everything except the nematodes could be swept away the abundance of those animals everywhere would ensure that the *outlines of the earth* and its mountains, rivers, and forests would still be visible."



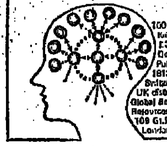


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The wisdom of the soil

By Denis Brass

MIGUEL TORGA :
Fogo preso
131pp. Coimbra: Gráfica. 80 esc.

Miguel Torga, the doyen of Portuguese letters, exemplifies in a many-faceted life, the three notes characteristic of his country: emigration, sentimental independence and uniqueness, as well as an awareness of the Iberian peninsula as a whole. He was born the son of illiterate peasants in Trás-os-Montes (literally, "behind the mountains"), in the remote north of Portugal, a region he has celebrated in countless short stories which have been acclaimed as some of the finest in the language and are written in a volcanic style that suggests the poverty, protest, and violence of the people who live there. His collection of animal stories, *Bichos* (1940), is perhaps only rivalled in peninsular literature by *Platero y yo*.

In 1919, at the age of twelve, after the poor boy's stint in a seminary, he emigrated to Brazil, where he worked on a plantation in Minas Gerais, tending cattle and chasing snakes. In 1923 he returned to Coimbra University to study medicine and qualify as an ear-nose-and-throat specialist. After a short experience as a rural GP he returned to the university city to practise.

This break with childhood routine, where life obeyed the cycle of the seasons and the liturgical year, has left its mark on all that Torga writes. A faith discarded has endowed his poetry with a powerful imagery, like an unmistakable fragrance from a childhood *locus amoenus*. He has the instinct of his people for community service and this has found an outlet in his medicine, where he is absorbed in the struggle against disease and death. This struggle goes hand in hand with another struggle, for Torga in poetry, he wrote in his *Diary* for July 1, 1965:

> Only now at two in the morning, can I give my attention to a muse that has been vainly trying all day to whisper me some message or other. The poet that dreams within me had to wait on the working doctor of the concrete now, dwelling alongside: a demanding siamese twin for whom any pain of the humblest of his kind is more important than all the epics. . . ."

Further, both poet and healer enjoy an affective sympathy: "In contrast to other professions that stifle the acceptance and the ability to understand one's fellows, medicine does the reverse: it does not close off the human spirit, but is at the heart and cult of all that is human, whatever the hour. This affective dimension the doctor shares with the artist, that most receptive and perceptive of human beings.

The poet as priest, peasant, and healer is beautifully symbolized in Torga's short story "Vindima", where a village priest leaves his church at the top of the hill, carrying the Host in all its panoply, summoned by a miller whose wife has been three days in labour with a breech birth, and who is only waiting for the liturgical quietus to be given to a victim of little more concern to him than one of his cattle. The scene is described: the chanting Latin interspersed with the cries of the ploughmen as they drive the oxen along the opening furrows; their hasty slurps at the wineskin before they reluctantly leave the fields to join the procession. After a short interrogation inside the mill, the priest sets the Host down on the flour-covered bedside box, unvests, rolls up his sleeves, and delivers the baby to the stupefaction of the babbling miller, and the expectant hum of the assembled village.

Torga has singled out one of his first poems "The Ballad of the Morgue" as a turning-point in his development as a poet. His sensibilities were outraged when, as a young medical student, he faced the silence and stillness of a cadaver, with its negation of all that he valued: sound, sight, sex, gesture, and, principally, voice. *The Other Book of Job* (1936), one of the more significant collections of the 1930s, rehearsed his encounters with women and his religious despair (a theme to be taken up again in *Penas do Purgatório*, 1954). But it was in another collection, *Poemas Ibéricos*, a miniature epic, that Torga was launched into the wider world of the peninsula. Here the energy of the human will and its achievements are exalted in an appraisal of the great peninsular adventure.

In his latest work, *Fogo preso*, a first collection of occasional, mainly political pieces, written since 1945, prohibited, and stored, Torga is confirmed as the prophet of the Portuguese Revolution. The eleven volumes of his *Diário* had already commented unrelentingly on Salazar's regime and had, from time to time, got him into trouble with the censors. But Portuguese writers have always been rebels, and the greatest Portuguese writing is resistance literature. In this collection, the poet descends into the arena of everyday affairs; he is the confessed socialist who once again repeats his faith in *telurismo*—his devotion to the soil and region that bore him. He holds that dialectic and political theory must take second place to the ancestral wisdom of the peasant community.

The title *Fogo preso* means "shackled fire", the firework that keeps to the earth. Fireworks are to be seen at every fiesta in the peninsula, and so the image is immediate. Contrary to the free-soaring rocket with its "descent in tears of coloured melancholy", these moored pyrotechnics—roman candles, catherine wheels, fire-crackers and squibs—have no licence to fly, "to embark on any illusion". The poet distinguishes between his lyricism, and his humdrum civic duty to take part in the everyday political life of his country. Hence these pieces for various political campaigns, mostly refused publication at the time they were written. They are now published, states Torga, to "give posterity an inkling of a tragic, lived-through experience".

In an essay on the nineteenth-century novelist Eça de Queirós, Torga adds his voice to those of Herculano and Garrett, who also entered the political arena and condemned provincialism in the universities as a blight on Portugal's development. But Torga goes further, for he is concerned with the influence on the young of a false and narrow attitude to learning. He links Eça's characteristic irony with that writer's experience in Coimbra University, an irony that appears in some shape or form in many of those who have passed through its gates. Torga suggests that Eça forced his readers to wallow in the melancholy of his characters as if they should derive some vicarious pleasure from it. But Coimbra, complains Torga, could not give Eça the essence of the Portuguese people, with whom he was out of touch. His picture of Portuguese society to this extent is misleading and limited.

The texts of *Fogo preso*, Torga believes, are collective in the sense that the poet sees himself as spokesman for the dispossessed, for those in Portugal who have long been deprived of the means of expression. Literature can afford to [illegible] approval, but a political speech, an interview cannot. The Finished as soon as pronounced. There is much in this comment about the role of the artist in [illegible] society, much about the [illegible] sent political ferment in Portugal and the difficulty of creating [illegible] government after years of [illegible] inertia. The voices the texts [illegible] of a striving democrat, Antônio Vieira, the great preacher and sustainer of Portuguese Revolution of 16[illegible] that it had come so quietly, so [illegible] and unexpectedly that it seemed a miracle. But he warned that it was now necessary to close the gate, open one's eyes. Torga has these sentiments about 1974. He [illegible] his fellow countrymen not to [illegible] one another and the Revolution to wage war on Portugal he [illegible] an open letter to the [illegible] journalist and writer [illegible] Correia. Torga shares her fear [illegible] internal hatreds risk destroying [illegible] gains of the Revolution commenting that the silence of the best [illegible] accomplice of the ranters were, another place he warns of [illegible] mimicry, of adopting solutions [illegible] do not sit squarely with Portuguese problems (a tilt at the Gaullist consulate). Politicians must [illegible] our way of life, temper [illegible] traditions and [illegible] tions. Their construct must take account of our special geographic economic, and human [illegible] Their solution must not be a [illegible] cea stuck on like a poster, but [illegible] flow naturally from the possibilities that inhere in each one of us. The remedy is for all Portuguese to be allowed to fulfil their constitutional duties, so that they can stop [illegible] in isolation from public affairs.

The words of the healer

By John Stathatos

TAKIS SINOPOULOS :
To chroniko
87pp. Athens : Kedros.
Syllogi 1, 1951-1964
331pp. Athens : Hermes.

Greece, whose recent history has included war, occupation, resistance, civil war and dictatorship, has had more need than most countries of the poet's services as interpreter and, ultimately, healer. Many poets have attempted to give such services but none so faithfully as Takis Sinopoulos, whose voice remains one of the most powerful in post-war Greek poetry. Sinopoulos has been described in his own country as a political poet, and has indeed used this label himself; but in an English-speaking context the term "political poet" has acquired sectarian overtones and needs to be qualified. If Sinopoulos is a political poet, then it is in the most basic sense of the term, as a poet deeply concerned and involved with his society, recording it with no *a priori* ideological convictions other than those of a committed humanist.

Completing his medical studies during the German occupation, Sinopoulos experienced the battles of the civil war as a regimental doctor. Those years marked him as they did all his generation, and provided the raw material of his first collection in 1951. At times elliptical in their use of formalized masks, with which the poet hides the face of his subjects, the poems of this collection were written in an urgent tone of visionary lyricism, often reaching a pitch of nightmarish intensity. Over the next ten years Sinopoulos published five more books, and despite excursions into surrealism and pure lyricism, always returned to his original existentialist concerns. These books were privately printed and have been unavailable for a long time. All the more reason therefore to welcome the first volume of his collected poems under the title *Syllogi 1* ("Collection 1") covering the years 1951-64. The high point of this volume is probably the long poem "The Song of Jouma and Constantino", a verse drama which fuses lyric poetry and dramatic monologue.

The colonels' coup of April 1967, provoked a spontaneous and unanimous strike among Greek writers. They continued working in private, however, and Sinopoulos was one of the driving forces behind the collection *Eighteen Texts*, published in 1970 to test the relaxation of censorship. That same year he also published "Deathfeast", a long, slow requiem commemorating the dead on both sides of the civil war. Writing what is almost an exorcism, the poet here drops the earlier classical masks; in place of "Elpenor" and "Helen" we have the solemn roll-call of the real dead: "Prosaras came holding his broken rifle./Alafouzos, and Bakrisiaris, and Zervos . . .". In the days that followed Sinopoulos found himself a witness to the increasing brutality of a floundering regime, and was himself at times caught up in its machinery; once more he saw the ghosts of 1940 and of 1946 walking the land. In his view, the only conceivable role for poetry was to witness and record. The result was the publication after the restoration of democracy of his largest and most impressive work, *To Chroniko* ("The Chronicle").

In an article for an Athens newspaper in 1976, Sinopoulos wrote, "For seven years and some months, Greece was a place of terror. If you will, cast your mind back and remember. It is not easy to relive that horror." In effect, the poet relives that period in *The Chronicle*, which deals above all with 1973-74, the last and darkest year of the dictatorship, the year of the Polytechnic massacre, and the invasion of Cyprus. The poem derives largely from personal experience, and is intensely political in the sense that here defined: it is the record of a citizen who is also a poet.

The Chronicle has three linked parts: ten sets of "Notations", a sequence of five "Nights", and a long final section entitled "Essay of 73-74". The introductory sets of "Notations" are just that: brief and laconic reflections on the poem which follows, combined with a shorthand record of memories and events to form a kind of journal kept by the poet. For the reader, the cumulative effect of these impressionistic flashes is a greater understanding of the agony which went into the writing. Behind the taunness of these eighty-seven pages, one senses the almost physical effort of grappling with the material: "Each poem a muster of the dead/known and unknown". And: "Remove a word and the poem creaks sometimes comes crashing to the ground".

The "Nights" section is [illegible] hermetic, more elusive, and its [illegible] is somehow more personal; judging from the echo of certain passages [illegible] may have been a preliminary exercise for the poem's final section. With the "Essay" *The Chronicle* confirmed as one of the semi-[illegible] poetic documents of the post-[illegible] period. Here Sinopoulos uses a [illegible] prose-poem format he first established in "Deathfeast" to record [illegible] anger and disgust; no longer [illegible] critical, the tone is now direct, [illegible] promising:

> The voice (this time repeating) a higher pitch. Who are you? Where are you going? Who did you meet today? What [illegible] your loyalties? Do you cooperate? Conform? Show me your identity card. The real one. Excellent. Stoop now. Stoop!

All the strings of the previous [illegible] sections are pulled together. [illegible] flashes of insight are used to illuminate the bleak and horrific landscape of the dictatorship, seen and transformed by the poet's eye. At times the language threatens to break down into nonsense, a grim reflection of the official Aesopian gobbledegook which poured [illegible] from the regime: "Each device [illegible] be positioned with care in such a way as to threaten the present and the future. Involvement and [illegible] lapement of varied sectors [illegible] positive growth coefficients." In some of its most powerful sections, the poem makes use of a kind of [illegible] pressionistic reflexion, as in the snapshot of an interrogator:

> Attending this interrogation [illegible] afternoon long, I can no longer distinguish lucts from [illegible] The volume of space [illegible] it barely holds this [illegible] intense circle of decreasing [illegible] Then,
>
> the guard is from the waist [illegible] walled into night's basement.

The Chronicle is not an [illegible] poem; neither is it [illegible] comfortable reading. It is a deeply personal document, one, as such [illegible] which I would not like to see the poet's last word on the fate of his country; but he is no more responsible for its tone than is a seismograph in recording an earthquake. In the meantime, Takis Sinopoulos can now be seen as one of the major Greek, and indeed European poets.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

HUMBERSIDE COUNTY COUNCIL
Humberside Libraries and Amenities Department
Bibliographical Officer
(North Division) AP 5 £3,825-£4,095 p.a. plus £312 supplement—plus 5 per cent of total earnings (minimum £130.32, maximum £208.56 p.a.)
Post No. 30.
The Bibliographical Officer is responsible for stock (books and other materials) in the Division which holds approximately 600,000 items circulated through 23 branch libraries, five mobile libraries and numerous other special service points. The Bibliographical Section handles readers' requests at Divisional level, the supply of books to evening classes and the processing of all new stock added to the Division.
Chartered librarian with extensive and current knowledge of bookstock and able to take decisions. Experience in controlling staff. Ability to drive essential.
Professional Librarians
AP 1-4 £2,127-£3,702 p.a. plus £312 supplement—plus 5 per cent of total earnings (minimum £130.32 maximum £208.56 p.a.)
Post No. 112
Required in the Scunthorpe Lending Services which consists of Central, Popular and Arts Libraries and six urban branches. The successful candidate will be required to undertake a wide range of professional duties in the Lending Services of the Division.
Post No. 67
Required in the Schools Section of the Central Division. Duties include the selection and preparation of balanced collections of books for despatch to schools with the object of fully supporting the requirements of the schools whilst making maximum use of available resources.
Post No. 106
Required to provide professional control and supervision to four rural branches—Ie, Barton on Humber, Barrow on Humber, Goxhill and Winterton—and to carry out the book reservation scheme at these branches. Duties also include branch staff timetabling, relief duties at rural branches, stock transfers and general care of branch bookstock.
Post No. 101
The postholder will initially provide professional work at Divisional HQ. In connection with the supply of books to schools. Main responsibility will be for the Schools Mobile Library which exchanges books at primary schools. Involvement also in stock control, project collections for schools and special activities with children. Responsible to Divisional Schools Librarian.
A qualified (preferably chartered) librarian is required. Experience of working with schools and discussing library problems with teachers. Good knowledge of children's literature. Ability to drive desirable but not essential.
Application forms for the above posts available from :—
Director of Libraries and Amenities (Ref.: AS),
Central Library, Albion Street, HULL.
Closing date for all the above posts 17th October, 1977.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Amenities Department (Library Service)
Section Head
(Lending Library Service Point)
£5,797 to £6,382
To ensure the efficient operation of the Lending Services at all libraries in the Borough in accordance with the policy of the Borough Librarian. Other duties include the investigation and application of computer techniques in the Library Service.
Application form, returnable by October 21 and detailed job description from Chief Personnel Officer, Town Hall, Catford, London SE6 4RU or telephone 01-690 7666 (24 hour Ansafone service) quoting reference AM48 and job title.

STIRLING DISTRICT LIBRARY
CHIEF ASSISTANT
(Central Lending Library)
Chartered Librarians, with extensive public library experience, are invited to apply for the above-noted post.
Successful applicant is directly responsible to the District Librarian for the administration of Central Lending Library, which serves the town area of Stirling, and has a staff of 12.
Salary : £4,840 min pa to £5,263 max pa.
Forms of application are obtainable from Miss C. E. Morrice, A.L.A., District Librarian, Stirling District Library, Admin Headquarters, Spittal Street, Stirling, and should be returned within 14 days of the date of this advertisement.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Assistant Professor of Modern European History
Applications are now being solicited by the Department of History, Harvard University, for an appointment as assistant professor in Modern European History, with a preference given those with a speciality in nineteenth-century intellectual or social history. Applicants must have doctorate degree or its equivalent. Send applications (including up-to-date curriculum vitae) to Professor F. L. Higginet, Department of History, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138 U.S.A.

Applications are invited for two posts of
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO
Applicants should preferably have a degree plus a Higher Diploma in Librarianship or ALA or BLS/MA (Librarianship) and should be familiar with the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules 1967 and the Dewey Decimal Classification 18th Edition. It is expected that the successful applicant should also have relevant experience related to cataloguing duties. The posts will be for Assistant Librarian (Bookshop). A librarian with professional experience in the Acquisitions Department is preferred. Duties will include : (a) the processing of orders for University text books ; (b) liaison between the Bookshop and the University ; and (c) other professional duties in the Library.
Salary scale : R5,403-R7,527 p.a. (£1 sterling=R1.51.) Non-contributory superannuation scheme for appointees on permanent terms. Appointees on contract terms receive 25% gratuity in lieu of superannuation for the first two years of the contract, rising to 27½% and 30% for each subsequent and similar period of service. 15% inducement allowance for expatriates not qualifying for any superannuation scheme. Accommodation is not immediately available. Passages and baggage entitlement on first appointment and at normal termination for appointee, wife and dependent children under the age of 21. Education allowance for expatriates. Vacation leave. Medical aid scheme.
Detailed applications (three copies) including a full curriculum vitae and naming three referees with addresses should be sent by airmail not later than 27 October, 1977, to the Registrar (Appointments), NUL, Roma, Lesotho. Applicants resident in the UK should also send one copy to the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas, 29-31 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 0DT. Further particulars may be obtained from either address.

OXFORD POLYTECHNIC
Department of Engineering
Lecturer—Senior Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering
to teach Properties of Materials and either Stress Analysis or Dynamics
Lecturer—Senior Lecturer in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
to teach within one or more of the following areas : Electrical Circuit Theory ; Control ; Electronics
Lecturer—Senior Lecturer in Engineering Design
Electrical or Electro/Mechanical Engineering design experience in industry is essential.
Research experience is important for the two of the above posts.
Salaries : £3,744 (bar) to £6,909
Applications, including a curriculum vitae and the names and addresses of three referees, should be sent to the Head of the Department of Engineering, Oxford Polytechnic, Oxford OX3 0BP, by October 21, 1977, from whom further details and application forms may be obtained.

WOLVERHAMPTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES
BRANCH LIBRARIAN
Applications are invited for the above post.
Salary is on AP1 (£2 reg.-£2,985 including July 1976 & 1977 Supplements).
Further details are available from the Assistant Chief Librarian (Administration), Central Library, Snow Hill, Wolverhampton. Applications within 14 days.

A CHARTERED LIBRARIAN
is required by an Architectural practice based in Cardiff to serve the Technical Library and Information Centre of the Organization. (Seven UK offices, plus overseas.)
The successful applicant will have considerable scope to effectively develop the Library Service offered to the Practice and should have cataloguing and classification experience.
The commencing salary will be negotiable, depending upon age and experience. Please write in the first instance giving full details, CV, etc, to Percy Thomas Partnership, 10 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF1 9YF, marked for the attention of Mr Dale Owen.

LIBRARIAN
Applications are invited for the above appointment in the
Divisional Library
at Barnwood, Gloucester
The successful candidate will be responsible within an engineering environment for the day to day running of the Divisional Library, for contributing to the planning and development of library facilities and for providing a technical and general information service.
Applicants should preferably be Chartered Librarians with a knowledge of and experience in the work of an industrial library. An awareness of information sources and an ability to use them in providing a speedy response to requests for information on a wide range of engineering topics will be an important asset.
The salary for the appointment will be within the range £3,483 to £4,779 per annum (including supplements).
Application forms obtainable from the Manager of Personnel and Administration, Central Electricity Generating Board, Generation Development and Construction Division, Barnett Way, Barnwood, Gloucester GL4 7RS (telephone Gloucester 4528301) should be completed and returned not later than 28 October, 1977. Enquiries and correspondence should be marked "Confidential—Ref. 134/77/TLS".

THE NETHERLANDS
University of Utrecht
Central Interfaculty
Applications are invited for appointment as
Lecturer in the History of Medieval Philosophy
The appointee will be expected to teach Philosophy to both "Kandidaats" and "Doctoraal" students and to do research in Medieval Philosophy.
Applicants should have an academic degree in Philosophy of which Medieval Philosophy was a part.
A thorough knowledge of Latin is essential.
If found suitable, the possibility of tenure exists for the appointee at the end of 4 years.
Salary, dependent on qualifications and experience, in the range of £3,271-£4,670 a month plus 8 per cent per annum holiday pay.
Possibilities for promotion are also present.
Further particulars from Prof. Dr. L. M. de Rijk, Dept. of Philosophy, Heidelberglaan 2, Utrecht.
Applications within 30 days of the appearance of this advertisement should be sent to the :
Appointments Committee Medieval Philosophy,
Bureau of the Central Interfaculty,
Heidelbergiaan 2,
Utrecht.
Those who know of suitable applicants are asked to contact the Appointments Committee.

County Library Service
Assistant Librarian
Grade AP2/3 £2,520-£3,282 plus £312 supplement, plus stage 2 supplement.
Applications are invited from qualified librarians for this post at Colchester Central Library. Some evening and Saturday duties involved, and enhanced payments will be made in respect of the Saturday duty.
Applications, which are invited from male and female candidates, should be addressed to Mr. B. Langton, County Librarian, County Library Headquarters, Goldlay Gardens, Chelmsford, Essex. Closing date is two weeks from the appearance of this advertisement.
Essex County Council

The 1st Brighton Book Fair
On Oct 21st the TLS will be publishing an Advertisement Feature on the Antiquarian Book Fair.
If you wish to take space within this feature please contact Lynn Bell, TLS Classified Advertisement Department, PO Box 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ.
OR PHONE 01-837 1234 extension 437

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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As Librarian and Keeper of the Records the Director is responsible for the collections of western and oriental books, manuscripts, drawings and photographs and for the custody of the archives, private papers, official publications and maps.

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Candidates, men and women preferably aged between 40 and 55, must be of high academic standing and be suitably experienced. They should normally be professionally qualified in, and have had experience of, librarianship and/or archive administration.

Non-contributory pension scheme.

For further details and an application form (to be returned by 8 November 1977) write to Civil Service Commission, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 68551 (answering service operates outside office hours).

Please quote ref:

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Archivist

Shell U.K. Administrative Services have a vacancy for an Assistant Archivist to work in their Records Centre and Archives Division, which has one unit situated in Shell Centre and another in Shell-Mex House both located in London. Initially you will be based in Shell Centre. You will be mainly concerned with the selection and processing of records for permanent preservation, the preparation of finding aids and undertaking searches as required. You will also be required to familiarize yourself with the organisation and functioning of the Records Centre and Archives Division as a whole and to deputize for the Head of the Division as required.

You will be a graduate with a Diploma in Archive Studies, aged between 24 and 28 and have three years' experience in a modern Records Office. A definite interest in the management of modern records is essential. Salary will be in the range £4,000–£4,400 depending upon age and experience. In addition there is a London Allowance of £498 p.a. Assistance will be given, where appropriate, with relocation expenses. Please write or telephone for an application form to:

Shell U.K. Administrative Services, Recruitment Division, PNEL/31, Shell Centre, London SE1 7NA. Tel: 01-934 2947.

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LIBRARIANS

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Phaidon Press, a specialist publisher of fine art books, has a vacancy for an ASSISTANT in its photographic library. Duties will include picture research, and general library and clerical work. The post is suitable for a librarian with a special interest in publications in art or a library assistant with experience in an art or photographic library.

This successful appointment will have the ability to type and to work under pressure.
Salary: £6,500 per annum.

Please write, enclosing curriculum vitae, to Mrs. E. O'Neill, Phaidon Press, Littlegate House, St. Ebbe Street, Oxford OX1 1PD.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Invites APPLICATION for the following POST:

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MEDICAL FACULTY
KUWAIT UNIVERSITY

Candidates, male or female should have a master's degree or professional qualification and at least 10 years' experience.

Salary £7,500 to £11,448 per annum free of local tax.

Benefits: free furnished accommodation; 60 days annual overseas-paid home leave; free medical services; 1 year contract, renewable.

Return fares are paid. Local consumable are guaranteed by the British Council. Please write briefly stating qualifications and length of appropriate experience, giving reference number 102, and title of post to Further details and application form to the British Council (Appointments), 65 Davies Street, London, W1Y 2AA.

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to assist the Librarian to improve and expand the research and information services offered to the 8 offices of the partnership situated in Central London.

The post offers considerable scope to intelligent and enthusiastic recently-qualified graduate or librarian who wishes to gain experience in business and commercial information resources.

Starting salary in the region of £3,800.

Please apply in writing to: John G. E. Cox, A.L.A., Librarian, Chestertons, 4/9 Wood Street, London, E.C.2, or telephone for an appointment (01-606 3000).

HARROW COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY & ART

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£2,860–£4,072

Required for the main Library (Lowlands Rd.). Applicants should be interested in building up the visual (pictorial) section of the stock. Will be required to assist in all aspects of library work.

Previous library experience desirable.

Applicants (men or women) must have completed A.L.A. examinations. Minimum of 2 years' satisfactory service. Lecturer will be £3,654–£4,072.

Application form and further details from Mr. Harvey, Deputy Librarian, Harrow College of Technology & Art, Lowlands Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3HE (Phone 01-864 4411, extension 31).

Applicants (men or women) must have completed A.L.A. examinations. Minimum of 2 years' satisfactory service. Lecturer will be £3,654–£4,072.

Application form and further details from Mr. Harvey, Deputy Librarian, Harrow College of Technology & Art, Lowlands Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3HE (Phone 01-864 4411, extension 31).

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE BRYNMOR JONES LIBRARY

APPLICATIONS are invited for the POST of SENIOR ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN. The initial duties will include Acquisitions (Grade 3: £3,387–£3,999) or Cataloguing (Grade 3: £3,387–£3,999) according to qualifications and experience. Knowledge of Slavonic languages would be an advantage.

Further particulars should be obtained from the Librarian, The Brynmor Jones Library, The University, Hull HU6 7RX, to whom applications should be sent, quoting reference number 77/78, not later than 31st October 1977.

MARIA GREY LIBRARY
Twickenham

TEMPORARY POST

APPLICATIONS are invited from QUALIFIED LIBRARIANS for the POST of DEPUTY to the sole librarian for a period of approximately eight months from the 1st November, 1977.

Salary scale: based on Local Authority Scale A1/A2/A3 (at 21 years of age £3,105–£3,870) including plus Stage II supplement of up to a maximum of £2,250 per week.

Application forms from: Assistant Librarian, Polytechnic of North London (Institute of Higher Education), Holloway Road, London N7 8DB (telephone 01-607 2789 Ext. 204) or Twickenham Town Hall (telephone 01-891 7691 Ext. 204) returnable by the 14th October, 1977.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

APPLICATIONS are invited for the POST of DEPUTY LIBRARIAN in Grade 3 of the National Salary Scale for Senior Library Staff. Candidates should have a good degree, also with experience at a senior level in academic libraries.

Applications, together with the names of three referees, should be received not later than 11th November 1977 at the Librarian, The University, P.O. Box 123, Liverpool L69 3DA, from whom further particulars may be obtained. Quote Ref: RV/074/TLS.

CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC

LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES SERVICE

TECHNICAL SERVICES LIBRARIAN (LISA Librarian I)

ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARIAN (LISA Librarian I)

Salary Scale: £5,717–£6,603 inclusive of London Weighting and Phase II supplement.

Applications are invited from CHARTERED LIBRARIANS for the above posts in the Technical Services Division of the Library.

The TECHNICAL SERVICES LIBRARIAN will be in charge of the cataloguing, acquisitions and serials departments. Knowledge and experience of MARC and technical services computer-based systems is essential as is management ability.

The ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARIAN will develop, organise and develop the Polytechnic archives and the Library's special collections. It administers, including the Fawcett Library, and maintains the Polytechnic's records.

Application forms and further details are available by telephone from The Assistant Secretary, City of London Polytechnic, 84 Moorgate, London EC2M 6SQ (01-606 3030 Ext. 216) to be returned not later than 21st October. Candidates should state clearly on the forms for which post they are applying.

THE POLYTECHNIC OF NORTH LONDON

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SUPPORT LIBRARIAN
LANGUAGES/LITERATURE

A vacancy exists in our Library at Prince of Wales Road, London NW5 for the Subject Librarian to serve the Department of Languages and Literature and to contribute to the development of the Library's Information Processing and Retrieval Service. Responsible and relevant experience plus evidence of ability to work under pressure.

Salary Scale: Librarian I, £3,594 to £4,605 (under review) plus allowances plus 2 per cent earnings supplement (London Weighting Area).

Application form and further details from: Library Education and Training Officer, The Polytechnic of North London, Holloway Road, London N7 8DB. Telephone: 01-607 2789, Ext. 210/204/205.

Closing date for applications 10 days from the appearance of this advertisement.

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY LIBRARY
SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN
Librarians Scale, £3,387 to £3,999 plus stage 1 and stage 2 supplements.

A qualified LIBRARIAN is required for the Basic POST of ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN (Schools) to work in the Administrative Section.

The Council will reimburse 100 per cent of the cost of removal expenses and up to £250 disturbance allowance.

Further details and forms of application may be obtained from the County Librarian, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH, to whom they should be returned within 14 days of the appearance of this advertisement.

GUY'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL
(University of London)
LIBRARIAN OR LIBRARY ASSISTANT

APPLICATIONS are invited from graduates, preferably with the Diploma in Medical Librarianship, for the POST of LIBRARIAN in the Medical School Library. Experience of running a number of small academic library services and achievement in medical subject information retrieval necessary.

Apply in writing, stating age and giving details of qualifications and experience (if any), to the Secretary, Guy's Hospital Medical School, London Bridge, SE1 9RT, quoting reference W.L.C.

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON LIBRARY

APPLICATIONS invited for POSITION of LIBRARY ASSISTANT from candidates with good O.C.E. or equivalent. Initial salaries in range of £3,161 per annum to £3,858 per annum inclusive, according to age and experience. Four weeks' annual holiday.

Further particulars and application forms from Librarian, King's College, London, Strand WC2R 2LS, to whom applications should be returned within 10 days.

LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE

LIBRARIES DEPARTMENT

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN APS—Children's and Schools

APPLICATIONS are invited from qualified LIBRARIANS for the above POST which is third in seniority in the Section. The principal responsibility will be to maintain and develop the School's Library Service. This post is not suitable for those without previous professional experience. Salary scale APO, £3,594 to £4,077 per annum inclusive (approximately).

Assistance with removal expenses and low rent scheme.

Application forms and particulars from the Borough Librarian, Central Library, Clarence Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 1UA.

Closing date: 17th October, 1977.

ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Our Student Library, which is due to move to Islington (near Angel Station) in 1978, needs suitable assistant for clerical duties and handling large book volumes. Typing useful.

Commencing salary within range £2,197 to £2,871 per annum plus free lunch in staff restaurant. Hours 9.00 to 5.15.

Written applications only to: Personnel Officer, 224 Great Portland St., London W1N 6AA.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN, GRADE III

APPLICATIONS are invited from men and women who are professionally qualified graduates for the above post, tenable from 1st September 1977. The post is within the Cataloguing Section and is likely to carry subject specialist responsibility in Social Sciences and/or the chief duties will involve the maintaining and enhancement of the official and government publications collection and their use, including instruction and guidance for both staff and readers.

Initial salary in range £3,333 to £3,978 on A.L.A. Grade II scale rising to £4,566 a year plus superannuation.

Applications from the Registrar and Secretary, The University, Sheffield 10, to whom applications (six copies) with names of three referees should be sent by 21st October, 1977. Quote ref. R.36/AL.

COUNTY OF SOUTH GLAMORGAN

SOUTH GLAMORGAN INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
PRINCIPAL LECTURER—CHIEF LIBRARIAN

Salary £9,540 plus £318 plus £180 to £9,642 plus £318 plus £180. Rate for point to be fixed by Burnham Committee.

APPLICATIONS are invited from suitably qualified persons for the above post which is offered on a full-time basis. Applications should be addressed to the Director of Education, Education Offices, Kingsway, Cardiff.

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including Mughal, Deccani, Central Indian, Rajasthani and Pahari miniatures from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century including a mahout riding on an elephant decked with full regalia, Mughal, *c.* 1580, Prince Salim out riding on an elephant, Mughal, *c.* 1600-05, and a portrait of a Kishangarh princess, *Kishangarh, c.* 1800; Persian miniatures from the fifteenth to the twentieth century including Mujnun arriving at Laila's encampment, Shiraz, *c.* 1570-80; Piran slain by Gudarz, Bukhara, *c.* 1570-80, a prince returning from the hunt by Muhammadi, Khurasan, *c.* 1570, four young scholars by Muhammad Murad Samarkandi, Bukhara, early seventeenth century, an assembly of Armenian ladies, Persia, late eighteenth century and a young mother clasping a naked child, Qajar, *c.* 1830; Arabic, Burmese, Indian, Persian and Turkish manuscripts and calligraphy including a Qur'an, Andalucia or North Africa, twelfth to thirteenth century and a Qur'an, Shiraz, sixteenth century; Persian lacquer work including a mirror-case, in the style of Isma'il, Qajar, *c.* 1860. *Illustrated Catalogue £3*

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 17
and following day
at 11 am, at New Bond Street

Printed Books relating to Science and Medicine

including J. Boar: *Lehre der Augenkrankheiten*, 2 vol., 1792; Berzelius, *Om Blasrorets anwandande i Kemien och Mineralogien*, 1820; T. Birch, *The History of the Royal Society*, 4 vol., 1756-57; Borelli, *De Motu Animalium*, 2 vol., 1680-81; Roger Boscovich, *De lumine Atmosphaera*, 1755, and *Dissertationes ad Diopticam*, 1767; Robert Boyle, *New Experiments Physico-mechanical*, first and second editions, 1660 and 1662 and other works; H. Braunschweig, *Liber de Arte Distillandi*, Strasburg, 1500; Descartes, *Principia Philosophiae*, 1644; Galileo, *Istoria . . . Macchie Solari*, 1613; J. R. Glauber, A collection of 16 Works bound in seven volumes, 1651-69; T. Harriot, *Artis Analyticae Praxis*, 1631; Hooke, *Micrographia*, 1665; Newton, *Principia*, 1687; Joseph Priestley, *The History and present State of Electricity*, 1767; G. Starkey, *The Marrow of Alchemy*, 1654-55; Books on Alchemy, Medical History, Rockets and Spaceflight, Mathematics and Pharmacology; Scientific Periodicals. *Illustrated Catalogue Price 40p*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20
at 11 am, at Hodgson's Rooms

Printed Books comprising Publishers' and other Trade Overstocks, End-of-Edition Runs and Remainders

including books in the fields of History, Economics, Business Studies, Sociology, Politics, Bibliography and Librarianship, Typography, Literature, Biography, Humour, Art and Art History, Music, Limited Editions, etc., etc. *Catalogue Price 50p*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24
and following day
at 11 am, at New Bond Street

Printed Books including Hebrew Books

the property of the late Sir James Williams-Drummond (removed from Hawthornden Castle), Mansfield College, Oxford, Mrs. Quentin Bell, and other owners, comprising English and Continental literature and history of the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, including Cervantes, *Don Quichotte, traduit par Florian*, 6 vol., Morocco by Bozerian, 1798/9; Terhorne, *Christian Ethicks*, 1675 in impression, collection of works by William Drummond of Hawthornden, and books from his library; Ben Jonson, *Workes*, 2 vol., with an elaborate inscription in Jonson's hand 1616-40; travel and topography, including Norden, *Speculi Britanniae pars. A . . . description of Cornwall*, 1728 and Pilny, *The historie of the world*, 1601; Plot, *The natural history of Staffordshire*, 1686; Russell and Price, *England displayed*, 2 vol., 1769; De la Condamine, *Journal du voyage à l'Equateur*, 6 works in 3 vol., 1751-54; Hebrew books, including Levita, *Tishbi*, 1541; *Megilla Esther*, manuscript on vellum, Italy, mid-eighteenth century; Shimon ben Zemach Duran, *Tzohat*, 1738; *Toldot Yakov Yoseph*, 1817; and Isserlein, *Ternat Hi'deshen*, 1519. *Illustrated Catalogues 60p*

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LECTURES & MEETINGS

RONALD HAYMAN, writer on contemporary theatre, will give a lecture in English on "Brecht and the English Theatre" on Wednesday 12th October, at 5.45 p.m. at the French Institute, Queensberry Place, SW7. Admission free.

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

We are looking for a person to assist our Librarian in all aspects of running a Civil Engineering Library.

Some library experience would be an advantage. The ability to type would be advantageous.

Please write to or telephone for an application form:

The Librarian (PSD)
George Wimpey & Co. Limited
Flyover House, Great West Road, Brentford, Middx.
Telephone: 01-560 3100 Extension 176

LIBRARY ASSISTANT

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT
GRAVESEND

A clerical assistant is required in the Intelligence and Communications Division to assist in the provision of library services.

Duties will include enquiry desk work, assisting in the cataloguing of library material, and general clerical work and filing related to the Department's Centralized Information System.

Applications are invited from candidates with library experience and typing ability.

Salary within a scale rising from £2,402 to £3,262 per annum, plus a further salary supplement.

Applications quoting vacancy number 1310/777/TLS, giving full details, should be forwarded to the Personnel Officer (Recruitment), Central Electricity Generating Board, Bankside House, Sumner Street, London SE1, to arrive by October 21, 1977.

South Eastern Region

ULSTER COLLEGE
THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLYTECHNIC

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Grade 2 or 3–Science and Technology

Salary Scale: Grade 2 £3,087–£4,869, Grade 3 £3,291–£3,987 inclusive of all supplements.

A professionally qualified librarian is required to join the group of subject specialists concerned with Science and Technology.

As well as possessing a professional qualification, applicants should be graduates, preferably with a science degree. For appointment at Grade 2, applicants should have had some years' relevant experience.

Further particulars and application forms which must be returned by October 24 may be obtained by telephoning Whiteabbey (0231) 65131 ext 2243 or by writing to: The Establishment Officer, Ulster College, The Northern Ireland Polytechnic, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT37 0QB.

ASSISTANT BOROUGH LIBRARIAN

PO2—£5,427-£6,012 inclusive plus Supplement of £312 p.a. and 5 per cent (£17.38 per month max.)

A fully qualified librarian with wide public library experience is required to supervise the libraries in the Fulham half of the Borough, i.e. the Fulham Library and four Branch Libraries.

He/she will also from time to time be responsible for a number of special projects. The post is third in seniority in the Libraries Department.

Application forms from Personnel Manager, London Borough of Hammersmith, Hammersmith House (BOC Building), Black's Road, W.6. Quoting ref.: RL5. Closing date: 21st October, 1977.

LONDON BOROUGH OF
HAMMERSMITH

LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SOUTHGATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Principal: W. A. O. Easton, MA, CEng, FIMechE, FRSA

LIBRARIAN (S21)

Applications are invited for this post to be responsible to the College Librarian for the day-to-day operation of the College Library. Applicants must be Chartered Librarians; experience in a further education library and/or a degree in a subject relevant to the work of this College would be advantages.

SALARY SCALE

AP4, £4,161 to £4,507 including London Weighting.

Further details and application forms may be obtained from the Principal, Southgate Technical College, High Street, Southgate, LONDON N14 6BS, on receipt of a s.a.e. which should be marked clearly with the job reference in which case no letter is necessary. Completed applications to be returned within 14 days of the appearance of this advertisement.

OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

Libraries, Art Galleries and Museums

LIBRARIAN

AP4 £3,366-£3,702 + supplements

Applications are invited for the above post from Chartered Librarians with experience or work in children's or school libraries. The post is contained within the Children's Services Division of the Department but carries responsibilities for a wider range of activity within the Department as a whole.

Application forms and full details of the post may be obtained from the Director, Central Library, Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DN.

Closing date for applications is October 24, 1977.

KINGSTON POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY

CATALOGUER

Applications are invited from graduate qualified librarians to join the existing team of cataloguers producing a COM catalogue in a busy Technical Services department. Candidates will be expected to have some knowledge of Dewey 18 and AACR '67.

AP3 grade £2,922-£3,282 plus £312 supplement plus stage 2 supplement plus London allowance £285.

Application forms from Assistant Registrar (personnel) Kingston Polytechnic, Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2EE, 01-549 1366.

LANCHESTER POLYTECHNIC
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Faculty of Art and Design

Applications are invited for the above position. Duties will include cataloguing and classification, assistance to readers and other general duties, in a specialised library with a small staff.

Candidates must be Chartered Librarians, and a degree will be an additional advantage.

Salary: AP. 4/5 £3,366-£4,095 plus £312 supplement plus July 1977 pay award.

For application form please apply in writing enclosing a foolscap stamped and addressed envelope to the Assistant Secretary (Personnel), Lanchester Polytechnic, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB, returnable by 17 October, 1977.